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The Write Path

Undergraduate

2020

The Write Path, Fourth Edition

Xavier University (Cincinnati, Ohio)

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Fourth Edition

THE WRITE PATH

First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier
Produced by the Xavier Writing Program



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The Write Path

First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier
Produced by the Xavier Writing Program
Fourth Edition

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Welcome!

As first year writers at Xavier, you may have questions or concerns about writing in your college courses. You may love to write and be excited about the new forms of composing you will learn in college or in your major, or you may feel intimidated and uncertain about what to expect. This book is designed to give you more information about writing in college and offer some examples of what successful college-level writing looks like, straight from Xavier students themselves.

In the first section of this book, you will find information about terms, ideas, and practices that will help you succeed with college-level writing and orient you to practices, policies, and resources for writing here at Xavier. As you read, you may find that you have heard some of this information before, though some of it may be entirely new. Words such as *rough draft*, *peer response*, and *rhetorical appeals* are likely to play a big part in your writing process in college, so being familiar with the meanings of these words can help you find your way in your writing courses. Additionally, this text will cover issues of academic honesty, plagiarism, and how to properly cite sources in research-based writing so that you can create quality work that acknowledges information you have learned from outside sources. Resources such as the Writing Center and Library will also be explained so that you know where to turn when you need additional support and information for your writing.

In the second section, you can read selected essays from first-year students at Xavier who, like you, were recently in ENGL 101 or ENGL 115 working on similar assignments. Looking through their work, you can see what type of writing is expected so that you can better understand the genres you will be asked to write in your first-year writing courses. You may have seen some of these before—such as a research-based argument—but you will be prompted to examine the writing more deeply with questions at the end so that you can more fully appreciate the “how” and “what” of research writing. Other genres—such as the rhetorical analysis or narrative arguments—may be less familiar, and seeing examples can give you an idea of what to expect from these assignments. These examples are not meant to be copied, nor do they represent a rigid set of expectations for an assignment, but rather, offer a model of one way that this type of writing can be successfully crafted.

As you write papers in your ENGL 101 or 115 courses, be on the lookout for papers you wrote particularly well, and consider submitting them for consideration for the D’Artagnan Award and next year’s *Write Path* publication. By submitting your work, you can support and encourage students who, like you, will be first-year college writers next year. What you learn now can benefit your fellow students in the future, so please pass along your wisdom and work.

Everyone arrives at college with different backgrounds, experiences, and types of education. This book has been created to help put you on the “write path” in your first year as a Xavier student and to answer questions you may have about writing in college. Also, if there is anything that would have benefited you that was not included in this book, please let me know so that we can consider including it next year.

Good luck in your first-year writing classes!

Sincerely,

Dr. Renea Frey

Writing Program Director

Introduction to The Write Path

College Writing—What Makes It Different?

Nearly everyone does some sort of writing in high school, but what kind and how much work you do may vary greatly from place to place. In your first year of college, one of the educational goals is to give all students a solid, common foundation in particular subjects, including writing, which can help you for the rest of the time you are at Xavier.

A common genre that students often learn in high school is the five-paragraph essay. While many of the conventions for this type of writing may transfer to college writing, you will also be expected to move beyond the five-paragraph essay to write increasingly complex, longer assignments. In many cases, you will be building upon writing skills you have already learned in high school and expanding them to fulfill new, more in-depth writing prompts.

For instance, you will still need to make strong, focused thesis statements that give the reader an overview of the claims you will be making in your work, and then organize the rest of your paper around supporting that claim with evidence. In most cases, you will also include elements like topic sentences that announce the content of a paragraph and transitions that allow the reader to easily follow your thought process. You should have a strong conclusion that gives the reader a “call to action” or explains the larger implications of your work or clarifies why thinking about this issue or text in this way matters. While many of these conventions may be similar to what you have done in high school, it is likely that your instructors in college will ask for greater detail, more depth, additional outside sources, and longer length papers than you typically worked on in high school.

Some other differences in college writing include the following:

- The type of evidence that “counts” in some assignments may include peer-reviewed scholarly sources which are written by and for academics in specific disciplines. These pieces may be longer than popular articles, include more field-specific jargon, and be challenging to interpret for those who are new to a discipline.
- You will likely need to offer multiple perspectives in your work, including counter-arguments to your position or refutations of competing perspectives. It is not enough to only argue *your* side—you need to view and fairly represent issues from multiple positions.
- In some cases, you may be asked to write from a formal third-person perspective, but in other cases, such as narratives or autoethnographies, you may have to write in first-person, beginning your thoughts with “I.”
- You will likely write for different audiences, some of which may be a community of scholars; other times, you may be writing for the public.

- Different disciplines have different conventions, citation systems (e.g., MLA, Chicago, or APA), and expectations. As you write for different courses from across the university, you will find that writing varies between disciplines and that what counts as “good writing” may vary in each class.
- How you conduct research, integrate quotes, and cite sources in your work may be more rigorous than what was expected in high school. As you enter college-level work, you become a part of a community of scholars who have high standards for academic integrity and attribution for work and ideas. (More on this topic later)

Even if you found writing in high school easy, the writing (and thinking) you will do in college will expand your previous skills. In addition, you will be writing for new audiences, about novel topics, and be asked to engage in assignments that will likely push beyond the work you did in high school. This learning can be both challenging and exciting, and the work you do in your first-year writing courses serves as a foundation for the writing you will create during your entire time at Xavier.

Process Writing

How many of us have waited to start a writing assignment until the night before, and then frantically written all night, quickly proofread the paper once or twice, and then turned it in at the last minute? While this may succeed in “getting the work done,” few people (despite the claims every instructor hears) actually produce their best work under these circumstances.

A common practice in ENGL 101 and 115 courses will be to engage in process-based writing. In this approach, instead of writing assignments where you write on your own, turn in your writing, and then receive a grade, you will work on your writing gradually, in stages, with feedback from peers and/or your instructor at multiple points along the way. In many of your other courses, you will still be asked to create writing where the final *product* is what counts, but in your first-year writing courses, we will also focus on the *process*.

Some of you may already be familiar with peer review—sharing your work with classmates to receive feedback and suggestions for revision—but in first-year writing, this may be more directed and involve particular practices, such as reading out loud, filling out a worksheet based upon the writing you read, or writing a reflection about what you changed in response to your peer’s suggestions. In addition, you may receive feedback from your instructor at various points in your composing process, or be asked to submit a proposal, outline, or research plan for your projects. By focusing on the process, your instructor can guide you as you draft, review, revise, redraft, and revise your papers again.

A process-based approach to writing may include all or some of the following steps:

- Invention work, including brainstorming, heuristics, listing, free-writing, or other exercises to start your thinking about a topic
- Proposals or research plans that ask for details about what, how, and when you intend to create a project

- Annotated bibliographies which require you to document, summarize, and analyze the sources you are exploring for your research
- Exploratory Essays (sometimes called Synthesis Essays) may be assigned which will ask you to discuss all of the sources you have examined for your research, and reflect upon how what you have learned informs your thinking about your topic
- Outlines or zero drafts where you begin the initial stages of your paper but have not yet composed a full copy
- Rough or first drafts that include all of your completed ideas but that are not yet in the “polished” stage of drafting
- Final or polished drafts that represent your best work which has been revised, edited, and proofread after receiving input from peers, your instructor, and/or the Writing Center
- Reflections on your writing process, revisions, or finished work

Throughout this process, your instructor may choose various places to intervene, read your current work, and offer feedback or direction. Your peers, too, may be a part of this process, in both formal peer reviews and informal discussions in class. Unlike many of your other courses, your instructor may give you points along the way for different stages of drafting—your finished paper may not be the only writing that “counts” toward your grade.

For many reasons, it is important to keep up with this process as it is outlined in your class schedule. First, it may affect the grade you receive on the overall assignment, especially if various drafts have point values assigned to them. Second, in a course that utilizes peer review, it is important that everyone have a draft to share so that participation is fair and possible. Third, by receiving feedback along the way, you can be more confident that you are fulfilling the assignment correctly and change course sooner if you find that you are not. Lastly, composing your work in steps, even if it is unfamiliar to you, will give you new, valuable skills that you can use in other courses.

Though many students can get into the habit of writing their entire paper quickly the night before, to succeed in college-level writing, it is imperative to take more time planning, drafting, and revising your work. Even the very best writers who are accustomed to receiving A's for their work can benefit from feedback and revision. Additionally, as you progress in your college education, you will encounter assignments that simply cannot be completed in one or two sittings. In order to produce your best work, as well as reduce needless stress, it is important to get into the habit of working on writing assignments in stages, over time.

When we “re-vise,” we are actually “re-visioning” or “re-seeing” our work with fresh eyes. If writing assignments are put off until the last minute, there simply is no time to do this, nor is there space to receive feedback, visit the Writing Center, or read work out loud in order to catch errors in wording.

For these reasons, your first-year writing courses will engage writing as process in some manner. This may be a new approach, or it may simply expand your past experiences. Either way, learning to see writing as an ongoing process will save you time, stress, and disappointment in the long run, and support your work in other courses. ENGL 101 and 115 encourage a foundation for best practices in writing that will serve you throughout your college career and beyond.

Rhetoric and Rhetorical Theory

You have likely heard the word “rhetoric” many times in your life, often in a derogatory manner that implies “merely words” or words without honesty or substance. Rhetoric, which will be addressed in both ENGL 101 and 115, is actually the art of speaking and writing effectively that dates back at least as far as ancient Athens in the Western tradition. Aristotle described rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion” and this definition, or similar ones offered by Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, and others, points to the study of rhetoric as the analysis and use of words to persuade an audience.

The ability to persuade effectively has implications for the use of that power, so some rhetoricians also address the idea of *ethics* within or alongside rhetoric. In the Jesuit educational system, there is a tradition called *eloquentia perfecta*, which is speaking (or writing) well for the greater good. As you study, analyze, and effectively use rhetoric, keep in mind that rhetoric, like many tools, can be utilized in both ethical and unethical ways. As you build knowledge and become more aware of rhetoric in the world around you, recall the practices of *reflection* and *discernment* that are also part of the Jesuit tradition—when you make choices about using your rhetorical skills, remember that rhetoric can serve the greater good or merely be self-serving.

Though we may not be aware of it, we use and encounter rhetoric all the time in our daily lives. You might engage rhetorical means when you try to persuade your roommate to pick up her dirty socks, or convince your parents to support a trip abroad, or write a cover letter to apply for a new job or internship. In each of these situations, you use persuasion to try to convince an audience of your perspective. Conversely, you also encounter rhetoric everyday in magazine or online ads, opinion pieces in the school newspaper, or political speeches on television or the Internet. Even memes, by using stock images and brief lines of text, provide short arguments that make a claim and try to convince the viewer of a particular perspective.

Because we use and encounter rhetoric so often in our everyday lives, it is important to understand how it operates in order to use it effectively and ethically. It is also crucial to recognize how rhetoric works on *you* in your daily encounters with texts, people, and ideas. With knowledge of how rhetorical appeals work, you will be able to engage the world around you with greater discernment, which will allow you to make more informed choices about the arguments you regularly witness.

Rhetorical Terms and Appeals

In ENGL 101 and 115 you will likely learn about *rhetorical appeals*, or the specific ways that people are generally persuaded. There are three main appeals:

- *Ethos*: The character or authority of the speaker/writer, which includes the reasons you might trust what a particular person says, either because of her virtues or knowledge. Audiences are not persuaded by speakers they do not trust.
- *Logos*: This is the logic or reason behind an argument that appeals to our rationality. An argument has to make sense and be backed with evidence in order for it to be accepted by an audience.
- *Pathos*: The emotions we feel when faced with a situation can also affect our choices and beliefs. We may be moved by compassion or fear to take a certain action for a social cause, or may feel joy and fulfillment when we are convinced to spend the weekend on vacation with friends.

Ideally, all of these appeals will work together in well-constructed, logical arguments that speak to our values and are presented to us by ethical, knowledgeable people. As you can imagine though, this is not always the case, which is why it is so important to discern and identify rhetorical appeals in our everyday lives.

Other terms you may hear in your studies of rhetoric include:

- *Audience*: All rhetorical acts engage a rhetor and an audience to whom the rhetor speaks or writes. You already tailor your messages depending upon your audience whether you are aware of it or not. When writing rhetorically, you will make more conscious choices about wording, style, or method of delivery in order to reach your audience most effectively.
- *Purpose*: All communication has a distinct and specific purpose. Do you want your audience to take a particular action? Or believe a new idea? Knowing what you want to accomplish with your writing will help you craft more effective texts.
- *Kairos*: This refers to the timing of a rhetorical text—what is relevant today may no longer make sense three months from now. A rhetorically effective text will take into account the timing of events and will arise at the proper moment.
- *Exigence*: Rhetorical texts respond to stimuli or events and may pose a potential solution to a problem. The exigence is a state that demands attention, and the rhetorical text is what arises in response to it.
- *The Five Canons of Rhetoric*
 1. *Invention*: Pre-writing work such as brainstorming, heuristics, listing, etc., that allows you to “discover” your argument
 2. *Arrangement*: Putting together your argument in a logical, effective way that your audience can easily follow
 3. *Style*: May include the wording, tone, or appearance appropriate for your text, audience, and purpose

4. *Memory*: In classical rhetoric, this refers to memorizing a speech, but today it can indicate referencing citations, digital memory, or public/cultural memory that influences rhetorical texts
5. *Delivery*: For classic oratory, this might include gestures or tone of voice, but in written texts may refer to the way writing is presented on a page, digital delivery, or forms such as video or podcasts

Knowing these terms and understanding their application will give you a vocabulary to analyze, think, and write about the way rhetoric works. In ENGL 101 and 115, you will likely conduct a *rhetorical analysis* at some point, which will ask you to examine a text and analyze its rhetorical components. You may also be asked to consciously utilize rhetorical appeals in your own writing as a means of creating more effective arguments. These may be new genres of writing and examples of effective rhetorical analyses, and rhetorically grounded arguments will be offered later in this book.

Though you may not have realized it, you are already surrounded by rhetoric and confront rhetorical appeals everyday. By understanding how rhetoric operates, you will be able to identify the persuasive tactics you encounter in order to make more informed choices *and* to interrogate your own use of rhetoric to ensure that your rhetorical skills are used in a way that serves your values.

Research, Citation, and Academic Honesty

In college, you will be asked to write research papers in many of your classes. In ENGL 101 and 115, you will learn about the conventions of research and citation as part of your course work. Again, some of this may be review, but many students find that college-level research writing entails more careful documentation than their high school writing required.

Research can be viewed as an ongoing conversation between multiple parties within and across disciplines. As new ideas are discovered, academics write up their findings and publish them in scholarly journals, where they are reviewed by their peers. When you read scholarly articles, you are “listening” to those conversations, and when you write research papers, you are “joining” that conversation by synthesizing information and applying it to your own interests.

One way that you can start to understand and analyze this scholarly conversation more thoroughly is through creating an Annotated Bibliography as part of your research work. Although what is expected for this assignment will vary depending upon the course, discipline, parameters of the upcoming paper you may write, concepts covered in class, or the preferences of your professor, all annotated bibliographies serve the purpose of both *summarizing* and *analyzing* the specific sources you are exploring in your research process. In addition to demonstrating to your professor that you are actively engaging with research on your topic, creating an annotated bibliography also allows you to contemplate sources more deeply, analyze their position or content, and consider how each source contributes to the work you are doing yourself. This thinking and writing

process can be very beneficial to you as you conduct research, allowing you to pause and think critically about each source that you examine prior to using it in a research paper or other assignment.

For an Annotated Bibliography like this, you would list each source alphabetically by author in proper citation format (MLA 8th edition for English classes, but check with your professor if you are unsure or if you are working on an assignment in a different discipline), and then provide the annotation—a summary and analysis of the source—underneath the entry. If you receive an Annotated Bibliography as an assignment, be sure to check with your professor about what he or she expects to see in each entry and how it should be formatted, as this can vary greatly depending upon the course. Remember, too, that you can take this assignment to the Writing Center for additional feedback or help with citation methods.

Because scholarly writing depends so much on the ongoing research “conversation,” the academic community has very high standards for crediting and citing research that others have conducted. While standards for citing and incorporating sources into your own work may vary in high school, once you are in college, there are particular rules that you must follow in order to keep your writing and research practices ethical.

In college, you will likely be asked to integrate outside research with your own ideas. When you do this, you may make claims or express ideas that are yours, and then back them up with evidence that comes from outside sources. This is a more complicated process than, say, writing a research report that summarizes the ideas of someone else, or an opinion paper that simply expresses your own position. In college writing, you will often be asked to integrate both of these practices into a more complex written argument.

When you utilize research conducted by others, it is important to always attribute those ideas to their sources. There are a variety of ways that you might incorporate outside sources into your work including:

- *Quote*: A short passage that is written out word for word exactly as the original author stated it
- *Paraphrase*: A segment of someone else’s work that you have put into your own words
- *Summary*: Condensing the overall idea of a work into a much shorter format in your own words

To maintain academic honesty you must cite the sources you use in all three of these cases.

Citing a source typically includes in-text citations inside of parentheses at the end of the sentence where the outside source is quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. For MLA format, which you will use in most of your English classes, this will include the author’s last name and the page number of the article or book where you found the information. Your papers should always include a Works Cited page where you list all of the sources you used for

your paper, arranged alphabetically by the author's last name; this should also include important publishing information, which will be covered in your class or found in an MLA 8th edition style guide.

Please note that as of March 2016, MLA has moved to 8th edition style guidelines, so the information in your textbook may not be updated if you are using an edition published prior to that time. You may need to consult an online database such as Purdue Owl, or purchase an MLA update supplement for your textbook.

Your ENGL 101 or 115 instructor will go over proper citation formats in class for different types of documents, but the first and most important step is to remember that you *must cite these sources*, even if you do not quote them directly. Although you may lose points for formatting a citation incorrectly or need to revise if you've made a mistake, citing outside work in the first place will allow you to avoid charges of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, which are much more serious.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism can be defined as using someone else's words or ideas without properly identifying the source. Plagiarism can carry dire consequences for students who engage in it, including failing grades for the assignment or course and in some cases, suspension.¹ Here are some basic types of plagiarism that can compromise a student's academic integrity:

- *Intentional Misrepresentation:* This occurs when a student deliberately attempts to present another's work as his or her own. This can include copying or paraphrasing someone else's writing without attributing the source, buying a paper online, or having someone else write the paper.
- *Self-Plagiarism:* This type of misrepresentation happens when a student "recycles" a paper written previously for another class or context. In some cases, you may want to continue research that you have conducted for another class or project, but *you may not use any writing that you have already turned in* for a grade. If you decide to further previous research, it is best to check with your instructor and be totally honest about what you are doing so that your motives and writing process are completely transparent.
- *Unintentional Misrepresentation:* When a student is not familiar with community citation standards or that these standards may be different from what he or she did in high school, it is possible to plagiarize due to uncertainty or lack of knowledge. When in doubt, cite your sources.
- *Patchwriting:* Rebecca Moore Howard (1993) defines "patchwriting" as "*copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym-substitutes.*" This type of plagiarism is not always the result of dishonesty; sometimes

¹ For more information about the penalties for academic dishonesty, see: <http://www.xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/Xaviers-Policy-on-Academic-Honesty.cfm> 9

it occurs because students are not familiar with the ideas or language they are attempting to incorporate. Nevertheless, it is still considered plagiarism *even if the sources are cited*.

- *Excessive Quotation*: Even if you cite your sources, you cannot cobble together a paper based mostly upon the words or ideas of others. When you use long quotes, do so sparingly and only when the author has stated an idea in such a way that it warrants the in-depth use of another's specific words. (Also check MLA citation guidelines, as long quotes require block formatting that is different from short quotes.) Be wary, however, about using multiple sets of long quotes as this may border on plagiarism, even if you cite the sources. When you write papers in college, the bulk of the words and ideas should be your own.

In some cases, you may not need to cite a source. For instance, when referring to your own personal experiences or thoughts, original research you have conducted yourself, or when you use common knowledge or widely accepted facts, a source is not necessary. What constitutes “common knowledge” may vary widely but is generally considered to be a fact that is easily accessible and consistent across many sources (e.g. the Declaration of Independence was ratified in 1776). However, if you are not sure if your information is considered common knowledge, *cite the source*.

Integrating sources correctly into your own work will also help you to avoid plagiarism, as doing so allows you to clearly show in your writing which ideas are your own and which ideas come from others. Although you may understand how a source supports or more fully clarifies your own work, it is important to explicitly explain that to your audience. Framing outside information will make your work more effective and also help you avoid accidental plagiarism:

- *Introduce* the integrated work with a short sentence or phrase that contextualizes the information for your reader.
- *Quote, Paraphrase, or Summarize* the work, including proper in-text documentation per citation style and then including all sources used in your Works Cited page.
- *Comment* on the work and how it relates to the argument or information you are presenting. This will help your reader understand how you interpret the work you are citing and its relationship to your own ideas.

Learning to effectively and ethically integrate research into your own writing is a key component of what you will learn in ENGL 101 and 115—skills that will also support your success in other classes throughout your time as a student. While other disciplines may use different citation styles (such as APA or Chicago), all disciplines value honest, ethical research practices and eschew anything that could be construed as plagiarism or misappropriation of another's work. For these reasons, it is very important that you learn and understand the research and citation methods expected of you in college, as the consequences for not following these community standards can be dire with long-term effects on your academic career.

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

Your instructor will have a clearly stated plagiarism policy in your ENGL 101 or 115 syllabus, and you should understand thoroughly the possible ramifications for not properly attributing your sources. Plagiarism often occurs when a student is pressed for time or overwhelmed by an assignment; sometimes, an otherwise honest student may make unfortunate choices in high pressure situations that lead to more work, trouble, and upset than taking the time to do the work honestly. If you find yourself in a situation where you are stuck or afraid that you cannot complete the work on time, talk to your instructor, or take your assignment prompt to the Writing Center for help or clarification. Even requesting an extension or having points docked for turning in a paper late are much less severe than a charge of plagiarism.

Students can mistakenly believe that their instructors will not know if they have plagiarized or copied a paper—in full or in part—from another source, but this is rarely the case. Software such as Turnitin catches many cases of plagiarism, and instructors generally know the writing styles of their students. With Internet technology, it is very easy for instructors to search for key terms in their students' work to see if a paper has been plagiarized or recycled from another source. Even under situations of stress, it is never a good idea to turn in work that is not fully your own—an honestly but poorly written draft can be corrected and recovered from, whereas an academic dishonesty charge will follow you throughout your college career.

Xavier's Academic Honesty Policy states the following:

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation.

All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own.

Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an “F” in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member, and chair should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.

Please note that not only are there immediate consequences for academic dishonesty (including a zero for the assignment, an “F” for the course, or expulsion from the University), but also that this action will be reported to the Dean’s office of the college in which you are enrolled, and that a record of this action will be recorded. While the ramifications for *any* instance of academic dishonesty are definitely not worth the risk, in the case of a second or repeated offense, the consequences are typically much more severe.

In all cases, academic honesty and integrity are always the “write path” to take. Citing your sources clearly and integrating them effectively into your own work will make you a better writer *and* help ensure your acceptance into a community of scholars.

Resources for Students

Xavier University McDonald Memorial Library

We often think of the library as a place to go to find books, but the library actually offers many more services that will be of use to you as you research various projects. In addition to the books housed in the library, you can also use OhioLINK or Inter-Library Loan (ILL) to check out any book available in libraries across the state or country. This gives you access to many more books than could be contained in a single building on campus. Keep in mind, though, that these services may take a few days to process your request and get the book to Xavier for you to pick up, so always start your research process early.

In addition to traditional print books, the library offers services to connect Xavier students to a variety of journals, media, and other resources. By using Search @ XU, you can easily access thousands of resources. In ENGL 101 or 115, your class may take a trip to the library, or a librarian may come to your class to talk with you about how to search the databases and find the information you need. You can also drop by the library, connect via chat text, or email the librarians to ask questions or to seek help if you are having trouble finding information.

The library has a makerspace on the first floor, right as you come in the main entrance from the Academic Mall. The makerspace is open to all students to explore, design, create, build, and collaborate using technologies such as 3D printing and 3D scanning, robotics, circuitry, programming, a laser etcher and CNC mill, tools, crafts, and more.

In addition to the library services, you can also use the Conaton Learning Commons (connected to the library building) as a place to study or meet with classmates to work on group projects. There are 14 group study rooms in the CLC with capacities that range from two or three people, up to 10 people. Many of these rooms are equipped with white boards or plasma screen projectors with web access, so you can easily share your work and collaborate in these spaces. There are also two small computing labs with access to photocopiers, printers, scanners, and computer workstations. Other student support services in the Conaton Learning Commons include the Learning Assistance Center,

Math Lab, Writing Center, Language Resource Center, Academic Advising, and Digital Media Lab. All of these services are here for you to use and can help support your writing and research in a variety of courses.

James A. Glenn Writing Center

The Writing Center is another important resource for students at Xavier to help them develop writing skills and to support them with writing assignments in various classes. Located in the CLC 400 (overlooking the circulation desk), the Writing Center offers peer tutoring help with writing during any part of the drafting process. While this is a great place to come if you want someone else to look over your paper once you have a rough draft, the Writing Center tutors can also help you understand an assignment more fully before you start drafting, work with brainstorming ideas, give assistance organizing a paper, offer direction if you are halfway through an essay and get stuck, or provide information about documenting sources. At any stage of the drafting process, the Writing Center is an invaluable asset for students working on writing.

If you use the Writing Center, it is best to make an appointment in advance by calling (513-745-2875) since there may or may not be a tutor available if you just walk in. While most students go to the Writing Center in person, sessions can also be conducted via Skype or email at writingcenter@xavier.edu.

When you go, be prepared with your assignment prompt and name of the class and professor, as well as any notes, texts that your writing refers to, and drafts or outlines you have already done. Think about areas where you need the most help with the assignment and have questions ready to ask the tutor, as this will allow you to make the best use of your time. It is optimal to plan to go to the Writing Center a few days before an assignment is due so that you have time to make revisions, or even do additional research before turning in work for your class. Sessions last about fifty minutes and the Writing Center is open a variety of hours (including Sundays) so that it is possible to find time in your schedule to make an appointment.

Some students mistakenly believe that the Writing Center is only used by people who struggle with writing or who are “bad” writers. The truth is, no matter how skilled a writer you are, receiving feedback on what you have written can improve the overall quality of the work you turn in. Everyone benefits from having reviews of their writing, and almost all writing can be developed more fully. The Writing Center is a key support service for success in ENGL 101 and 115, as well as other courses and projects that require writing. Be sure to utilize this resource while you are at Xavier.

Some Words About Success

In your first year at Xavier, you will be building the skills you need to succeed in your classes, as well as your life beyond the university. The writing you will practice in your ENGL 101 and 115 courses is a part of that skillset, but it does not exist in isolation. Part of success in writing—or college, or life in general—is planning your time wisely so that you are able to meet all of your commitments

without being overwhelmed or stressed in the process. It may be a change for you to have to plan so many activities, assignments, and classes yourself, but learning to do so effectively will ensure that you are able to be successful in your courses.

Learning to write well takes practice, which is why we promote a process-based approach to writing. You may find writing more challenging in college than you did in high school, but as with learning any new skill, you will find that you develop efficacy the more you practice. Be sure to give yourself enough time to work on your writing assignments, even in courses where the process itself is not emphasized as much as it is in ENGL 101 or 115. Brainstorm, jot down outlines, take good notes on your research, write rough drafts, and visit the Writing Center. All of these practices will not only increase the likelihood of achieving higher grades on your papers, but also develop the skills you need to write well in all areas of your life.

Remember though, as with any skill, writing capability is acquired over time and with repeated practice. While feedback from peers, your professor, or a peer tutor can aid in developing your skills as a writer, these practices do not automatically guarantee that you will get the highest grade possible on an assignment. All students build competency over time, and peers, professors, and tutors can only address a few issues at once. Be patient with the process and engage all of the resources available to you at Xavier to ensure that you reach the highest level of writing success you can during your time in college.

Student Work

How to Use This Text

In the upcoming pages, you will find examples of student work from first year students who, just like you, took ENGL 101 and/or 115. These examples can be used in a variety of ways and are here to support the writing that you will do in your first year at Xavier.

One way that these student essays can help you is to illustrate what the different genres of writing you may encounter in ENGL 101 and 115 look like. It can be hard to craft a particular kind of writing, such as a rhetorical analysis or ethnography, if you have no idea what these genres are or should include. By looking at an example paper, you can see what typically goes into writing this type of paper, as well as observe how this can be done particularly well.

These papers do not serve as a rigid template for you to copy. Rather, you should use these texts as models for what to expect in a particular genre of writing, what you should include, what “works” about a piece of writing, and then consider how you can adapt or include those skills in your own work. By “stepping back” from a text and asking questions about how it is composed, you can analyze not only the content, but also the rhetorical and compositional strategies that are employed in creating that piece of writing.

To guide you through reading these examples, each paper will be foregrounded by a reflection from the students themselves, discussing their writing process for that paper. You can see through their words what challenges, obstacles, strategies, and steps they took to get to the finished piece of writing that is published in this book. As readers, we often only get to see the product of a writer’s efforts, but in this text, you will also gain insight about the process that led to these essays. By reading these reflections by students, you might find that you relate to some of their struggles, or learn an important tip that could help you with your own writing.

After the reflection, you will find the essay itself followed by a short series of questions. These questions ask you to look more deeply at the writing itself to ascertain what you think the writer was doing or intending at different points along the way. How does this writer transition from one idea to the next? What kinds of sources does this writer use as support for her argument? How are quotes integrated into this argument? These are the kinds of questions that may be presented after the essay itself for you to consider and/or for your instructor to use in class to prompt discussion about the writing process.

By examining the writing of other students who were working under similar conditions, you can seek guidance and encouragement for your own work in first-year composition and rhetoric courses at Xavier. Additionally, by analyzing the writing process in this way, you can learn more about the way that you write. How do *you* transition between ideas? Support your claims? Or integrate quotes? By getting into the habit of analyzing writing itself, rather than only its

content, you gain *meta-cognitive awareness* of your own writing process. By understanding how writing happens, you can acquire insight about what you do, how you do it, and why.

This knowledge can allow you to make more conscious choices and utilize the Jesuit principles of *reflection* and *discernment*. Through reflection on your writing, you can learn more about yourself as a writer and communicator, and then make more discerning choices about those practices. As you develop your skills as a writer in your first-year courses, you will build the foundation of your future academic success, as well as establish tools with which to participate in your communities, careers, and civic lives. This text is designed to assist you in those endeavors and to serve as a guide for your first year as a college writer.

The D'Artagnan Award

The essays that you find in this book all come from entries for the D'Artagnan Award, an annual award co-sponsored by Xavier's Writing Program, the Dean's office, and the Writing Center. Each year, students are encouraged to submit their best work from ENGL 101 and 115 for this award. The submitted essays can be written in any genre, and the top three winners, along with a selection of other exemplary student work, will be published in *The Write Path: First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier* for the following year.

The name for this award was chosen specifically because D'Artagnan, like our first-year writers, had to work hard to improve his skills, overcome obstacles, and rise to the challenge of new situations that require maturity and development. First-year students who win this award become leaders for future students, as their work will become a tool to guide new first-year writers on their educational journey.

As you use this text this year and develop your writing skills in ENGL 101 and 115, please consider submitting your favorite pieces for next year's D'Artagnan Award. You can learn more about this award and submit work anytime throughout the year at <https://www.xavier.edu/english-department/writing-program/the-dartagnan-award>.

Category: Research-Based Argument

Each year we choose the top essays submitted to receive the D'Artagnan Award. This year's top winners all fall into the category of research-based argument and include a first place winner, first runner-up, and a tie for second runner-up.

Josie Smith asks important questions in our First Place essay entitled, "Sexual Assault Prevention: Is It Enough?" In this essay, Josie explores a difficult issue that has wide-ranging effects and hits much closer to home. After establishing the scope of the problem nationally and noting that current programs do have some positive effects, Josie goes on to present research showing some of the reasons why current practices are simply not enough to combat such a ubiquitous problem. In addition to evidence about sexual assault nation-wide, Josie also connects those trends to Xavier University, showing how this is not only a problem "out there," but also one that affects immediate safety issues on campus. This attention to location, audience, and exigence makes Josie's essay relevant to her audience and shows how the arguments you research and write in your classes can have an impact on your life and community outside of the classroom.

In the First Runner-Up winner's essay, "The Dangers of Vaccine Hesitancy," Rachel Baker opens with a stark, very recent (2019) warning from the World Health Organization, which listed vaccine hesitancy as one of the top ten potential dangers facing the world today. From this opening, Rachel goes on to state a strong thesis, arguing that we should make vaccines mandatory, a controversial position in the climate of constant debate that we currently see in our culture. Through the use of multiple sources, Rachel addresses counter-arguments repeatedly throughout this essay, arguing her case strongly that vaccines are imperative to worldwide, community health showing, too, what can happen when vaccines are not implemented universally, such as the measles outbreak in 2014. By demonstrating her knowledge of the vaccine debate from multiple perspectives, by the end of her paper, it is clear that Rachel has built her argument upon well-researched, credible sources that lead her to her point of view.

This year we had a two-way tie for Second Runner-Up between Grace Eckert and her essay, "Finding a Common Denominator: The Correlation of Fear between Horror Movies and Climate Change," and Samantha Mossing's essay, "Halloween: Gender Roles, but Festive." Both of these essays have some themes in common, such as examining the "spirit of the season" in October through examining horror movies, fear, and the tradition of dressing in costume. Despite these similarities, Grace and Samantha explore very different ideas, with Grace making comparisons between the American fascination with horror movies (a fictional threat) and climate change (a real threat) and what we can learn from this juxtaposition about the human condition. Samantha, on the other hand, looks at the gendered nature of so many Halloween costumes, showing how seasonal disguises also hide the less festive truth of gender

expectations and limitations for women. In both essays, these students offer a unique take on a common theme, linking a holiday to the more serious issues of climate change and sexism and offering reasoned arguments for pairing these issues for the sake of analysis.

Although you may find that your classes require you to write other types of research-based arguments or that your prompts are very different from the ones for which these essays were written, there are elements you will see in these research-based arguments that will help you with your assignments. When reading these essays, notice how the writer sets up his or her argument. Is it engaging to the reader? What kinds of evidence do these writers use? How are sources integrated? Think, too, about how papers begin and end. What draws a reader into a paper? How do papers conclude in a way that is memorable and effective? Each of these three papers offers in-depth arguments that rely upon quite a bit of outside research and information. Notice how the arguments are arranged. What claims come first, second, and third? Is the order effective? Why might the author have chosen to set up the argument in this manner?

In all of these cases, the student writers have produced exemplary work in their first-year writing courses and have learned skills for research writing and argumentation that will serve them in other classes as well. Although each discipline has its own sets of rules and expectations for writing, many of these skills—such as integrating sources, making claims, using evidence to support one's position, etc.—will be necessary in a variety of contexts. Your first-year writing courses will help you develop these skills more fully so that you are able to utilize them effectively throughout your time at Xavier.

In the following student selections, you will read reflections from Josie, Rachel, Grace, and Samantha before reading their work. This will give you insight about the different practices that produced these pieces and offer advice from these writers that may help you in your own writing process. At the end of each essay, you will find questions to consider about the particular piece you have just completed reading. These prompts will guide you to explore the writing and rhetorical strategies used by these student writers so that you might gain deeper understanding of what makes this work effective and you, too, could apply these skills to your writing.

The editorial team hopes that you enjoy reading these essays as much as we did and that you, like the students represented here, are able to develop your writing, argument, and research skills in your first year at Xavier.

Sexual Assault Prevention: Is it Enough?

Josie Smith

D'Artagnan Award Winner—First Place

Research-Based Argument

Reflection

Bringing awareness to sexual assault on college campuses is not only an important cause, but something that I never thought I would be truly passionate about. As much as I felt a calling to research this topic, as I am a first-year, female college student, I never understood the magnitude of sexual assault on campus. Reflecting upon the precautions my parents described to me prior to beginning my first year at Xavier and the presentation given at Manresa on the warning signs of sexual assault, helped me to narrow down my topic as my mind searched for holes and gaps in these teachings. I found that I, along with so many other researchers and students, believe that the methods designed to decrease the prevalence of sexual assault on campus are ineffective, but that there must be ways to help this cause.

Finding research on this topic was not difficult as many scholarly evaluations of programs are available, but compiling the information became my main struggle. Considering there is so much available information about sexual assault and prevention techniques, to ensure I did not crowd my paper with unnecessary facts, I took great care in choosing solely the information that most strongly supported my thesis. Throughout the revision process, I continued to add more points pertaining to the Xavier community as I felt relating issues of sexual assault to our immediate neighborhood strengthened the absorption of my message. It is easy to disregard these problems when they seem out of reach but immersing yourself in the fact that sexual assault is a relevant problem, even in our community, kick-starts the conversation about protection and prevention.

Completing this essay had an impact on me knowing that the information within it could potentially save someone from experiencing the horror of sexual assault. It instilled greater sympathy in me for victims, their families, and even women at colleges with extremely lacking preventative programs. I can honestly say that understanding the concepts presented in this essay gave me a greatly different perspective on college life and how walking back to Brockman Hall alone after a late night of studying in Alter and feeling completely safe, is a luxury not many college students have.

Sexual Assault Prevention: Is it Enough?

Sexual assault is a nationwide problem that plagues society, especially on college campuses across the United States. In a study conducted by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, they found that 11.2% of students experience sexual violence during their time in university, and about 8.8% of these victims are female (RAINN). While most colleges and universities provide mandatory classes warning of the dangers of sexual assault in hopes of preventing further offenses, these programs are lacking in their effectiveness. Some argue that sexual assault prevention programs on campus have lasting, positive effects on students, especially in regards to increased awareness of campus resources (Bonar 1). While these programs have strong short-term effects, the long-term effects are what need increased attention if the prevalence of sexual assault on campus is to decrease. After evaluating students on many different campuses regarding consent and sexual behavior, researchers found most students seemed almost completely oblivious to the problem and lacking in their awareness of the necessity for consent (Borges 1). Educational improvements, program edits, and studies should be conducted to identify the most effective form of combatting sexual assault on campus with the greatest long-term results. Although efforts are taken on college campuses to ensure adequate awareness and safety of students regarding sexual assault, they are lacking in their effectiveness and therefore, require improvements.

College programs to educate students on the dangers of sexual assault vary for each campus in their organization, but most narrow their focus to one common idea such as defining consent. Sexual Assault Prevention Education (SAPE) programming addresses the issues of sexual assault and is translated into any effort made by the institution to "... affect sexual assault related attitudes" (Jozkowski 1). The focus of this organization is to emphasize consent as clear communication of enthusiasm for participating in sexual acts as an apparatus for prevention, centering it on the simplest three letter word: yes. Not only is this demonstrated in the form of classes or workshops educating students on sexual assault, but even the cheesy bulletin boards designed by your residence hall director explaining the pathway to consent fall under this category of prevention education. This form of sexual assault prevention is the most widely utilized by college campuses across the United States, as it seems like a fool-proof way to constantly remind students of the dangers of sexual violence. Even on Xavier University's campus, magnets featuring a "consent flow chart" and student organized demonstrations of the concept that "if I can't say yes, then I can't say no" serve as daily reminders of the necessity to recognize true consent. While these mantras stick in students' heads like a Britney Spears song, they also raise controversy from those who argue that decreasing the severity of sexual assault and necessity for consent to a simplistic phrase is inappropriate and ineffective (Jozkowski 33).

While repetition promotes awareness of the problem, it does not always directly correlate with understanding of the concept it addresses. An evaluation of 220 undergraduates' awareness of consent and sexual assault before participating in a newly devised program showed that most students were "...unaware of these policies or what they mean for actual behavior" (Borges 1). Only after being exposed to a longer treatment group involving discussions of policies, explanations of parameters, and participation in simulations, did members show a beneficial increase in knowledge. In an experiment comparing the effect of a presentation-only program on the control group and pairing that with an activity for the experimental group, the experimental group showed a significant difference in knowledge of the basic elements of consent (Borges 85). The problem arises in the fact that most colleges do not provide such an extensive program, while some shy away from sexual assault prevention altogether. This idea of neglecting to address issues related to sex was confronted on the private, religious-based campus of Charleston Southern University. Sexual violence survivors shared their stories with over 75 students to influence awareness, and after evaluating surveys taken before and after the event, participants concluded that the program was informative and more widely accepted due to the vulnerability of the speaker (Johnson 1). The implementation of emotion into prevention proves beneficial results on student awareness in generating greater empathy for victims, but the question remains: is this enough?

Emphasizing what not to do in the spectrum of sexual assault is a focus on college campuses, but researchers raise the idea that focusing on tools for proper actions and positive living provide a clearer avenue for prevention (Borges 77). Much of the talk of sexual assault in the media and on campus is in a negative connotation, focusing on the evil actions of the perpetrator and unfortunately, sometimes criticizing the accuser for not doing certain things to help prevent an attack. While communicating the dark and evil reality of sexual assault to the student body is necessary for understanding of magnitude of the problem, tools for building healthy relationships and reducing the risk of creating unhealthy environments with significant others have greater utilization (Borges 77). Romantic relationships are often equated with consent, which blurs the lines between mistaking silence as consent and the necessity for that three-letter word. A study conducted by Swift and Ryan-Finn found that while the concept and expression of consent seems like a cookie cutter definition for all members of society, sociocultural factors affect the perception of consent, leading to greater perpetration of sexual assault (Borges 78). While consent is usually outlined in the school policies on sexual misconduct, programs should be created to elaborate on the components and dispel any confusion resulting from rape myths or other factors (Borges 78). Along with defining the parameters of true consent, providing tools to form healthy relationships is a key factor in eradicating sexual assault within relationships, which can act as a starting point for prevention on the larger scale across campus.

While programs that emphasize consent as the main learning objective, theoretically, should produce positive results, some repercussions arise from honing in on this concept. Empowering the voice and choice of women is a large change from past ideologies regarding women's sexuality, but that does not take away from the fact that refusals and affirmations of sexual endeavors are so often disrespected. Understanding the power shifts between men and women is required to realize how consent-based programs indirectly drive their focus away from empathy towards victims, while disregarding the major role played by the attacker (Jozkowski 33). If college programs shift their emphasis solely to consent, then terms such as victim-blaming and rape culture must be defined and explained to students as they are often repercussions from ignorance of a victim's voice and story after being assaulted. Some school policies reinforce those stereotypical social norms which require that "women must restrict their behavior to that narrow range deemed appropriate for 'nice girls' or bear the consequences of assault and associated blame" (Day 262). Narrowing the scope of sexual assault to a degree of personal responsibility of the victim rather than unjustifiable actions by the attacker creates even greater problems in sexual assault prevention. When sexual assault programs on college campuses promote a feeling of unimportance or inferiority in women, the campus and members cannot move forward as a community against sexual violence, rather, they drift further from achieving a solution. A study published in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* describes how programs to educate students on sexual assault are the first step, but reducing the fear of students in and around campus is the next major step to be taken in sexual assault prevention (Day 279). Both the school and society should do their part to renovate dangerous areas, prevent student housing in neighborhoods with high crime rates, and increase patrol services throughout the campus area.

Some evaluations of sexual assault programs find that they do, in fact, provide sufficient information on sexual violence and have lasting effects on students. At one large, public university, students were submitted to a 1.5-hour program focusing on tools to build healthy relationships and teaching of prevention techniques (Bonar 93). Evaluating the changes in their knowledge before and after the program using a web-based survey proved positive results in their awareness of campus resources for sexual assault prevention and assistance to victims, as well as general knowledge about the magnitude of sexual violence (Bonar 96). While some evaluations show that campus programs do help increase knowledge of sexual assault and prevention, the way in which they evaluate is not uniform, skewing the results across the board. Taking a survey immediately after participating in a program is not an effective way to test students' knowledge of sexual assault, and even though other evaluations can be created to test the effectiveness, most universities do not take time to contemplate the results and better their programs for the future. When

program evaluations are run, often the program is improved solely for that test, but continues in the insufficient manner of teaching students even after seeing the results. Constant reinforcement of campus policies and resources creates an environment of genuine understanding that sexual assault is a problem on every college campus in the United States but is so often disregarded as a channel to prevent further assault.

Although some research programs can, theoretically, prove the effective way college sexual assault programs are run, the truth is in the fact that sexual assault is still a crippling event to victims, and plagues all college campuses across the United States. Improvements such as imputing emotional testimonies from victims, peer-lead open discussion programs, and activities to solidify information presented in the program will surely improve the awareness of sexual assault as a serious problem for college students. Not only will improving programs increase prevention of sexual assault, but addressing victims with sympathy and constant support, as well as assaulters in their post-assault period will help to eradicate much of the sexual assault crisis and help protect college students across the United States (Mahoney 35).

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Questions to Consider

1. Josie begins her essay by establishing that sexual assault on college campuses is indeed a wide spread problem, as well as how colleges are choosing to handle that reality through classes and efforts at prevention. She addresses these arguments before going on to make her claim, which is that these measures are not enough. How does this opening work to ground the rest of her argument? How else might this essay have opened? What is the rhetorical effect of establishing the scope of the problem immediately, rather than introducing this information later in the paper? How did you, as a reader, respond to this information?
2. While Josie has clearly researched sexual assault on campuses as a national problem, she also connects that to the immediate surroundings of Xavier's campus, placing these violent crimes squarely at home. As a student at Xavier, how did you react to that? What difference does this local connection make to readers as they take in this information? How does Josie's writing take audience and exigence into account? Do you think this was an effective strategy? Why or why not?
3. As you have likely heard in your first-year writing course, effective arguments often integrate a mix of pathos, ethos, and logos appeals in order to be persuasive. How does this argument use each of these appeals? What emotions do you experience as a reader? How does the writer establish her ethos in relation to her audience? How does Josie use facts, statistics, and research to back her claims? Which of these do you, personally, find the most compelling?

The Dangers of Vaccine Hesitancy

Rachel Baker

D'Artagnan Award Winner—First Runner-Up

Research-Based Argument

Reflection

When we were asked to write an argumentative research paper relating to our major, I knew that I wanted to write about vaccine hesitancy since it is very controversial, is a major current event, and has a big impact on public health and safety. I was able to find many good news sources from the past two-three years and a few scientific papers about vaccines that are recent. However, the sources were all pro-vaccine, making it hard to find a counter-argument. I knew of the other side and their concerns, but it was hard to find a reliable source that represented the “anti-vaxx” movement. I eventually found the transcript to an interview with Jenny McCarthy, a celebrity anti-vaxxer, on Frontline. In the interview, McCarthy rejected the idea that anyone is an anti-vaxxer and is an advocate for rethinking the schedule in which vaccines are given. This completely changed my idea of how I wanted to address and refute the counter-argument and eventually changed my perceptions of the other side. I would definitely say to anyone trying to write this type of essay to look at both sides thoroughly before even starting to write anything because you never truly know the counterargument until you look at it in-depth.

The Dangers of Vaccine Hesitancy

Vaccine hesitancy was named in the World Health Organization's (WHO) "Ten Threats to Global Health in 2019" list ("Ten Threats"). The WHO defines vaccine hesitancy as "the reluctance and refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines." Vaccine hesitancy is mostly referring to the large group of anti-vaxxers in first-world countries who refuse to vaccinate their child due to their belief that vaccines cause autism and other health problems. The growing movement poses large and dangerous health risks for not only their child but also for their surrounding communities. It should be mandatory that children are vaccinated, and adults receive boosters against the major illnesses in order to prevent a dangerous mass spread of disease.

Doctors and researchers have been working for centuries to help people become immune to widespread diseases. Vaccines have helped reduce these diseases to where they are almost non-existent, saving millions of lives each year. There have been many diseases that have been completely eliminated, thanks to vaccines. An example of an eliminated disease is smallpox, as it is now only known to exist in laboratories (Paoli). Anti-vaxxers are reversing all of that hard work and dedication to world health, as we have recently seen with the reappearance of measles. Not only are they harming their child, but they threaten future generations by not putting a stop to diseases now. Doctors are trying to fight back by putting all the information out there they can in hopes to change some minds (Knopf).

In December 2014, a measles outbreak started in California. The outbreak was linked to Disneyland after someone with measles visited, spread it to unvaccinated people in the park, and those people went home and spread it more. Those people who went home after contracting measles started an outbreak that would end up in seven states, Mexico, and Canada. The significance of this event, other than having 147 people infected, was that measles had been declared eliminated in the United States in 2000 (Aliferis). In February 2019, Washington had a measles outbreak that accounted for 40% of the United States' reported cases (Flaccus). The people who did not vaccinate their children caused widespread disease. This is a prime example of why children should mandatorily be vaccinated against diseases, as the majority of cases in the Washington outbreak were children under 10 who were not vaccinated (Flaccus).

Anti-vaxxers have many reasons why they do not vaccinate, including the unknown harms of vaccine ingredients, vaccine side effects, the disease being vaccinated against has been eliminated in the United States, and that vaccines cause autism (Frontline; Maskell). Many celebrities have sided with the anti-vaxx movement, including actress and activist, Jenny McCarthy. She has become the face of the movement. In an interview with *Frontline*, she stated that the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine caused her son, Ethan's,

autism. Multiple research studies have shown that there is no causal effect that vaccines have on autism, and the study she referenced in the interview is fatally flawed.

In the interview, McCarthy says that after her son was administered the MMR vaccine, he started to regress. She noticed he was “not talking as much as he used to. In playgroup, he was more by himself Then he started to develop blue circles under his eyes, bloated belly, gas, constipation, eczema, yeast” (Frontline). She said those symptoms, looking back, corresponded with autism. When asked when she first heard about a connection between vaccines and autism, she talks about how mothers were worried the MMR vaccine caused autism. This was due to a study done by Andrew Wakefield, MD, that was published in *The Lancet*, a medical journal, a few years earlier showing that there was a causal relationship between the MMR vaccine and autism (“Do Vaccines Cause Autism?”).

This study has shown to be flawed in many ways. First, the study has been discredited. A few years after the study was published, it was discovered that Wakefield “had been paid by attorneys seeking to file lawsuits against vaccine manufacturers” (“Do Vaccines Cause Autism?”). This immediately discredited the study, which was then retracted by both Wakefield and *The Lancet*. Wakefield has also been banned from practicing medicine in Britain after he had been found guilty of creating false data about the children in the study. Second, ever since the study was first published, many studies have been conducted with attempts to find a connection between the MMR vaccine, or any vaccine, and autism (Hviid et al.). Luckily, none have been successful. Therefore, a link between autism and the MMR vaccine has not been proven.

Wakefield’s false claim still has some parents convinced against vaccination. Today, it is easy to spread misinformation and myths with “fake news” that seems believable and realistic (Quick). To McCarthy’s credit, some concerns made in her interview are viable, such as the need for more conversation between doctors and patients regarding vaccines. Yet, as the face of a movement against vaccines, it is important for her not to spread false claims and to spread correct information. The claim that vaccines cause autism is incorrect and shows that she has not been researching her argument well. This is not to lessen her son’s autism or discredit that it happened after getting the MMR vaccine; it is saying that the likelihood that vaccine caused the autism is miniscule with the evidence we have at this time.

Seeing as unvaccinated children are the largest cohort of people contracting measles, it should be noted that vaccinations not only protect you and your child, but others as well. When your child is vaccinated, they become immune to the disease or illness. This means that if they come into contact with the disease or illness, they will not get it. This minimizes the risk of other children getting it, as it is not able to thrive in your community. If your child was not vaccinated “your child may spread their illness to vulnerable people, such as infants and those with compromised immune systems” (Scutti). This idea that you and your child being vaccinated protects others is called “Herd Immunity”

(Sadarangani). The idea of herd immunity may seem like it helps the anti-vaxx movement, since those who are not vaccinated are protected. In reality, herd immunity can only go so far. As Dr. Manish Sadarangani of the Oxford Vaccine Group explains it, a large portion of the population needs to be vaccinated in order for herd immunity to work. He says that it only takes a slight drop in the number of vaccinated people for herd immunity to become ineffective. Herd immunity can really only protect those who cannot be vaccinated because they are too young or have immune system problems (Sadarangani). Dr. Sanjay Gupta, the Chief Medical Correspondent for CNN, says, "It's not just because I love my kids that I vaccinated them. It's because I love your kids as well." Here, Dr. Gupta is saying that he is using the concept of herd immunity to protect your children as well as his own while pulling at a parent's heartstrings (Gupta).

A common anti-vaxx statement is that the vaccine schedules are overloading their child's immune system. In McCarthy's interview, she says that the schedule set forth by the CDC is "'too many too soon'" (Frontline). While there are a lot of vaccines, all of them are important for your child's and public's health. The CDC has a set schedule that doctors follow; it is created by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. The members on the committee are chosen by the US Department of Health and Human Services secretary and are medical experts on public health, pediatrics, virology and immunology. The committee is constantly re-evaluating which vaccines are given, which ones they are given with, and the schedule in which to give them (Scutti). Delaying vaccines has not shown to provide any benefit to children. With the number of germs children are exposed to on a daily basis, a child's immune system fights much stronger germs than they would receive in a vaccination. Pushing back vaccinations allows them a longer opportunity to contract the disease, as unvaccinated children are at a higher risk of contracting the disease (Scutti).

Many parents are also concerned about the side effects of vaccines. For the most part, children will not have any side effects. On occasion, children will have a sore arm, a small amount of bruising at the injection site, and even more rarely, a mild fever (Scutti). These are not the side effects that parents are worried about though. They are worried about their child developing an allergic reaction, seizures, respiratory infections, and all of the other radical effects you see on the news (Maskell). However, these effects have a one in one million chance of happening, and the likelihood that you are to be struck by lightning is much higher than that (Gupta). In a recent study on children with suspected allergic reactions to vaccines, it has been shown that they can also complete a full vaccine schedule with help and high surveillance by medical professionals (Franceschini). So, if a child who is allergic to vaccines can get vaccinated safely, then there is no reason your child cannot.

In the development of the first vaccine, which was against smallpox, the first version (then called variolation) was dried pox scabs scraped off the infected person and placed under the skin of the person being variolated (Reich). This

early version of the vaccine was obviously very dangerous and most of the time, gave people the disease. Thankfully, our current vaccines are more effective, less invasive, and less disgusting. Yet, anti-vaxxers are weary of what is inside vaccines, saying that they are full of toxic ingredients like aluminum, mercury, and formaldehyde (Maskell). Yes, all of those ingredients are in vaccines; however, they are not even close to “toxic” levels. Aluminum is in everything from plants to soil to air to water. Aluminum is even in breastmilk, which is what babies have been drinking since the evolution of mammals (“What Goes Into a Vaccine?”). The amount of aluminum in vaccines is so small that it causes no change in the base amount in the bloodstream and has no evidence showing it is harmful. Vaccines have an ingredient named “thimerosal,” which is ethylmercury and is used as a preservative. Ethylmercury breaks down and is excreted very quickly. In previous vaccines, methylmercury was used often and was found to be very harmful, which caused the switch to ethylmercury. Mercury is harmful in large amounts, so the amount in vaccines is very small. It is also only in flu vaccines, and there are thimerosal-free versions. Formaldehyde is used to deactivate the virus in the vaccine, but causes much concern as it has been classified as a carcinogen by the US Environmental Protection Agency. The harm potential depends on the amount; long-term exposure is very harmful, but small amounts are fine. Formaldehyde is in our bodies naturally as part of our metabolic process. The amount in vaccines is 50 to 70 times less than is in a newborn’s body (“What Goes Into a Vaccine?”). The ingredients and amounts in vaccines are safe and have been researched thoroughly before being put into production, distributed, and injected into you and your child.

In certain situations in life, there may be a point in time where decisions need to be made on whether or not to abandon beliefs in order to help the common good. It is never an easy decision, but it is one that needs to be made. In the United States, the current debate on vaccines is whether or not to force people to get them. The nation has to decide whether that is constitutional or not and if it is not, then they have to decide if it is worth pushing our beliefs aside to benefit the health of the nation. This is the argument to focus on rather than questioning the centuries of science and research behind developing the vaccines we have today to be the best they can be. In my opinion, public health should be placed at a high priority. To the anti-vaxxers’ point, there should be lengthier conversations about vaccines between patient and doctor. However, this cannot happen if there is a nationwide epidemic, and the health of our nation decreases rapidly. If no one is there to have the conversations, do more research on vaccinations, discuss schedules, etc., then none of this arguing is worth it. The nation’s health and safety should be put first by making it mandatory that people are up to date on vaccines for the major illnesses and diseases.

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Questions to Consider

1. Rachel begins her essay with a piece of startling—and very recent—information from the World Health Organization about the level of threat with which they view vaccine hesitancy. Rhetorically speaking, what effect does this opening have upon the reader? What was your reaction when you read the first line? How might this opening appeal to emotions, logic, and Rachel's credibility all at once? Do you think it is an effective opening? Why or why not?
2. While many research-based arguments give a strong claim of some kind near the beginning of the essay, Rachel offers a straight-forward solution, saying directly what she believes ought to be done about this issue. What other claims could she have made with the same information? What audience(s) might be most influenced to accept—or reject—her claim at the outset? To whom do you think Rachel's argument is directed? How is it crafted in order to be persuasive to the people she hopes to influence?
3. Rachel offers many counter-arguments throughout this paper, showing how others who do not agree with her have arrived at their beliefs or showing the various positions that they take. What effect does this have upon the overall paper? What is the reason to offer these counter-arguments? How does Rachel then deal with these potential counter-claims? How might this strategy work to influence particular audiences?

Finding a Common Denominator: The Correlation of Fear between Horror Movies and Climate Change

Grace Eckert

D'Artagnan Award Winner—Second Runner-Up (Tie)

Research-Based Argument

Reflection

With this project, I initially struggled to come up with an idea for the paper. I wanted to write about something relevant to today, something that mattered. I also wanted to challenge myself in this project by researching something that there may not be a concrete answer to. As I worked through a few ideas, I asked myself a lot of questions about the world we live in and why things are the way they are. Through this process, I realized that I wanted to tackle a current issue that directly impacts the world today: climate change. I wanted to better understand why people deny the existence, effects, and causes of climate change although it has been scientifically proven. After thinking through the issue more, I wanted to break down the process behind beliefs and fear in the human mind. When doing so, I was reminded of urban legends and supernatural myths that so many people claim to believe. After looking at the statistics, I found it ironic that more people believed in supernatural entities—that are not proven—than climate change, which is scientifically proven. I decided that I wanted to explore this phenomenon further to find the common factors between them in order to better understand climate change denial.

When doing my research for this piece, I struggled the most in finding credible sources on such specific topics. A lot of sources I found were either not credible or difficult to access. However, it is extremely important to take extra care in finding the most credible sources for any research, and so I had to do a lot of digging and searching to find the sources I used. I also used this challenge as an opportunity to get creative in looking for my sources outside of just databases. Before writing anything, I made sure to gather as much research as I could to ensure that I was as educated as possible on the issue. Once I gathered and looked over everything I needed, I began my paper by creating an outline. Personally, using an outline is helpful because I can move paragraphs around to find the order I like before writing the paper. This also makes writing transitions between the paragraphs easier because I know what's coming next. After writing the outline, I then wrote a draft of the entire paper. When writing, I ran into a few speed bumps along the way, like needing a few more sources, not understanding a specific term or concept, or fact checking a source. Though it took some extra time, it was important to pause my writing and address the issue.

My advice for first-year writers is this: find a way to care about what you're writing. Sometimes, the prompts you are given aren't always the most exciting or maybe don't provide you with much freedom. And in those instances, do

the best that you can. But when given the opportunity—any chance at all—to make your paper or project more interesting to you, do it. Write about something you care about, something that you enjoy, even something that you hate. The more passionate you are or interested in about something you're writing about, the more inclined you will be to make it count. Try something new or step outside of your comfort zone. Take risks and challenge yourself. But most importantly, always try to connect yourself with your writing.

Finding a Common Denominator: The Correlation of Fear between Horror Movies and Climate Change

In the early twentieth century, the emergence of horror films gave birth to what is now one of the most popular film genres in the United States. Since the beginning of horror's hair-raising, skin-tingling escapades, America's obsession with guts and gore has only skyrocketed, bringing in millions annually at the box office. The month of October is an especially prominent time for the streaming of horror films as a tradition of the so-called "spooky season." This fixation with horror is reflective of a generally common belief in things like ghosts, demons, Bigfoot, etc.—all things not yet proven to even exist—and forms the basis for the celebration of Halloween (one of America's biggest celebrations). Yet there is an ironic amount of apathy and even denial in America when it comes to things that are scientifically proven to both exist and pose a serious threat to humanity, especially regarding climate change. Despite reports of rising temperatures, pollution, and extinction, many Americans still deny the existence of global warming. Additionally, many who believe in the existence of climate change refuse to believe that humans are making it worse. But how is it possible to accept the unproven, while at the same time rejecting what we know is real? After a close examination of the psychology of fear and a thorough analysis of cognitive errors in human beings, it can be discovered that human beings generally only truly fear things that are visible and can have an immediate, direct effect onto them.

In 2017, films like *Get Out*, *It*, *Happy Death Day*, and *Annabelle: Creation* dominated the box office, selling 115,877,974 tickets and making around \$1,039,425,572 (Box Office Performance for Horror Movies in 2017), making 2017 America's most successful year for horror movies yet (Murphy). The success of horror films in America is reflective of the obsession over, and belief in, conspiracies that are commonly associated with the genre, such as ghosts and demons. According to an article from *TIME Magazine*, "[many Americans] accept the existence of the paranormal: 42% believe in ghosts and 41% in extrasensory perception. And those numbers are stable" (Kluger). Although there is little to no evidence that these things exist, a significant proportion of Americans still believe that they do. Furthermore, the fact that these myths are not proven to exist means that they pose absolutely no threat to humanity, and therefore shouldn't be feared.

Climate change, however, should be. And yet, it isn't. As the success of horror films reached a new record in 2017, climate change hit records of its own. In annual reports, it has been found that the ice caps are melting, animals are going extinct, and temperatures are rising—all at unprecedented rates. According to the National Wildlife Foundation, Glacier National Park was recorded to have held around 150 glaciers in 1910, but as of June 2017, there were only 26 left. That number has continued to shrink and is expected to eventually reach zero ("Fast Facts About Climate Change"). Yet as startling as this information may seem, it may be even more shocking to hear that a majority of Americans actually believe that climate change exists, but deny that it will have any negative impact on us. According to one of Gallup's most recent polls, around 66% of Americans say that global warming is occurring, but only 45% believe that global warming will pose a serious threat (Brenan and Saad). These numbers are actually higher than in the previous years, but still indicate that the majority of Americans believe that climate change will have no significant impact on humanity. Despite this, science shows that global warming will have harmful effects. According to NASA, long-term effects of climate change include longer droughts (meaning less water for us to use), stronger hurricanes (meaning more destruction to our cities and maybe even more fatalities), a rising sea level (which also means more damage and possible fatalities), and much more ("How climate is changing"). If the issue of climate change is not addressed soon, there will be serious consequences for the environment, animals, and eventually, humanity.

But before delving any further into the issue, it is first important to understand what fear within the human mind and body is, where it comes from, and why. An article from *The Dana Foundation*, a philanthropic organization focused on advancing research on the brain, explains that the human "alarm circuit for fear" lies within the amygdala, which is described as an almond-like mass in the temporal lobe of the brain (Edwards). The amygdala is responsible for breaking down emotions, especially ones like fear that correlate with a specific danger or threat. Edwards adds that the amygdala can function two different ways: either by allowing the brain to prepare for any potential threats before the danger is even identified, or by reacting to the threat via some sort of action (Edwards). The amygdala is necessary for human survival as it allows us to identify what may be a threat to our safety and gives us the power to react accordingly. Without it, humans would have no way to respond to frightening external stimuli and would be left helpless in the face of danger.

Activity within the amygdala indicates when a person is generally scared. However, it is also necessary to discern the difference between fear and anxiety, as both emotions can falsely imitate the other and are stimulated by different things. *The Dana Foundation* also states that in response to a stimulus, fear is a physical response, while anxiety is more of a psychological response (Edwards). Fear, in the human brain, is triggered by an actual, immediate threat to safety, while anxiety within the brain produces the feeling of being at risk when in

reality, an immediate threat does not exist, and there is no actual danger. Fear has been essential to human survival and evolution, as it triggers the instinctive “fight or flight” response so that we may react.

But if fear is a natural instinct used to help humans survive, then why do so many people enjoy being scared by horror movies? Many credit the success of horror movies to the “rush” that many viewers get when scared. Feltman and Kaplan explain that when we are scared, “our hearts speed up and we breathe more rapidly, our muscles get more blood with more oxygen in it, which is what we need to fight the danger or flee from it as fast as we can. A hormone called epinephrine ... is released to trigger these superpowers” (Feltman and Kaplan). The rush of adrenaline associated with this reaction affects everyone differently, and while some feel powerful and excited, others feel panicked and nauseous. Those who experience the powerful rush tend to recover much faster, making the movie-going experience more of a thrilling event rather than terrifying one. Some even find the sensation addicting and are the ones typically dubbed “horror movie junkies.” In an interview with Margee Kerr, Feltman and Kaplan find that “when we’re in a safe place and we know it, it takes less than a second for us to remember we’re not actually in danger. Then we switch over to enjoying it. It’s a kind of euphoria” (Feltman and Kaplan). This provides significant evidence for the success of things like horror films and haunted houses that are created to induce fear; the viewers know that they cannot be harmed and are in no immediate danger, and therefore experience more enjoyment out of the experience than fear.

While horror movies are often inspired by things that people are afraid of or believe in, the reason for success in horror films still doesn’t explain the psychology behind the beliefs in imagined creatures and myths. Some researchers argue that one of the primary reasons people are drawn to believing in imagined entities is because of cognitive errors that lead to a lack of understanding of what real evidence is. These cognitive errors may also apply to those who deny climate change or its implications. An article from the *Skeptical Inquirer*, a magazine focused primarily around scientific investigation, reports that cognitive errors like “confirmation bias...frequency illusion, illusory correlation ... bandwagon effect, and so on” (Bakker) are what lead to the aforementioned lack of understanding. They allow the person to misinterpret the information or stimuli they’ve received, creating a false ideology as a result. The American Psychological Association, or APA, defines confirmation bias as the inclination to interpret any new evidence as a confirmation of a belief. This is problematic because the evidence that is given may be incorrect or biased and, therefore, decreases the validity of the belief. Illusory correlation is found when there is an appearance of a relationship or pattern that actually doesn’t exist (*American Psychological Association*). The Baader-Meinhof phenomenon, or frequency illusion, is a phenomenon that occurs when once a new piece of information is learned, it is noticed everywhere else. These errors in thinking and interpreting data lead to a misunderstanding of what constitutes real evidence and can also be applied to the belief in the nonexistent.

In America today, the fascination with horror has planted a seed of fear in things that have not even been proven to exist and are entirely harmless. At the same time, Americans are scrutinizing and even doubting an issue scientifically proven to exist, with very dangerous implications nonetheless. So how is this possible? Modern psychology points to the idea of *risk perception* as an answer. Nadja Popovich et al. explains that “Global warming is precisely the kind of threat humans are awful at dealing with: a problem with enormous consequences over the long term, but little that is sharply visible on a personal level in the short term.” Humans are only concerned with things that are either visible to or have a direct impact on us. Climate change, however, is difficult to personally observe, and its consequences are not immediate. The human brain is meant to respond to stimuli with fight-or-flight reactions, therefore only responding to threats with a direct impact on ourselves. That said, when it comes to issues that are not as immediate or relevant to ourselves, the human brain is naturally not nearly as inclined to act.

When in the case of imagined creatures, it is natural for human beings to believe in and be afraid of things that are both observable and have the ability to pose any sort of immediate threat. A fire is visible to the human eye and can hurt someone immediately if they get too close. In the same way, a bear is visible and poses the same direct threat. Within these two examples, it is natural instinct for a human to be afraid of them because of the aforementioned characteristics. From this, it is observable that human beings are afraid of things not based upon the reality of the situation or of the thing’s existence, but from how immediate the threat they pose is. To the human mind, it does not matter whether or not something is proven to exist because if that thing has the potential to exist, then it too should be feared.

In the case of climate change, it is not natural for human beings to be afraid, though given the potential threats, we probably should be. Climate change is a slow-moving process, and its consequences are long term. To the human eye, changes within the earth are not very observable unless shown from a more objective perspective or compared to an image or data of something many years before. The slowness of climate change also means that its impact on humanity is indirect. The earth itself will be the most directly harmed first, which will then in turn harm the ecosystem and, finally, humans. Therefore, it is difficult for the human brain to perceive climate change as a threat to ourselves; we can’t see it happening, and it doesn’t directly harm us.

In a country where horror movies continue to dominate the box office as climate change progresses at unprecedented rates, it is imperative to understand why so many Americans believe in the impossible and deny the possible. And when something as real and as dangerous as climate change is ignored, it will only continue to worsen, with more and more devastating effects. After a thorough analysis of the psychology of fear and cognitive errors within the human brain, it becomes clear how such a phenomenon is possible. The common denominator of fear between the imagined conspiracies of horror movies and the scientific proof of climate change lies within the concept of risk perception. Human beings only truly fear things that are visible and can have an immediate,

direct effect onto them. We are afraid of things not based upon the reality of the situation but from the danger of the threat they pose. If that thing has the potential to exist, then it should be feared. It is difficult for the human brain to perceive climate change as a threat to ourselves because we can't see it happening, and it doesn't immediately harm us. However, if no actions are taken to increase awareness about global warming, the long term effects will soon be destructive and potentially irreversible. Therefore, it is necessary to educate ourselves and others on the issue to reduce apathy and incite change, otherwise we may face something much scarier than watching the latest thriller.

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Questions to Consider

1. Grace's title sums up an unlikely analytic pairing between horror movies and climate change, offering readers an immediate idea of where her paper is going. When you first read her title, how did you react? Had you ever considered examining horror movies and climate change in light of human fear responses? If you had not, might you do so now? Additionally, what might be a reason to consider seemingly different areas of human experience and responses in a side-by-side way, as Grace does in this essay?
2. In her thesis, Grace makes the claim that "human beings generally only truly fear things that are visible and can have an immediate, direct effect onto them," which is why they respond to horror films, even though they are fictional, more strongly than to climate change, which is a real, physical danger but not one that is immediate. What was your first response to this claim? Did your perception or knowledge of human fear change over the course of reading Grace's argument? Why or why not?
3. Because Grace was juxtaposing two areas of research, she had to draw on sources that came from a variety of fields. How does Grace integrate the research for this project into her writing? How does she put multiple fields—such as film studies, climate change, and psychology—into conversation with one another? How does she choose to organize and present her argument throughout her paper in a way that supports her original claim? Did you find the arrangement of information in this essay compelling, easy to follow, and supportive of the thesis? Why or why not?

Halloween: Gender Roles, but Festive

Samantha Mossing

D'Artagnan Award Winner—Second Runner-Up (Tie)

Research-Based Argument

Reflection

As daunting as a research paper can be, this one was surprisingly interesting and almost enjoyable for me to write. I could choose any topic I wanted, as long as my paper was a “researched argument” related to Halloween. As a freshman in college around Halloween time, I was surrounded by people, especially girls, talking about what they wanted to be for Halloween. A significant portion of the time, the costumes were intended to be attractive or revealing, and it occurred to me that gender roles are often crucial in a person’s decision on what costume to wear, even among young children. Interested in this phenomenon, I started searching Xavier’s databases in order to find others with a similar argument. After finding about six or seven relevant articles, I printed them off and skimmed through them, highlighting any important quote or piece of information that I might want to include in my paper. Although this took some time, it helped immensely when I began writing because all of my possible evidence was all in the same place. Then, I outlined my paper and began writing. The process of actually writing the paper took probably around a week and a half.

Because I was able to find ample research to back up my argument and because I was enthusiastic about the topic, the process was not challenging for me as much as it was tedious and time-consuming. Refining my research results and trying to choose which quote I wanted to use took time and effort. I probably would have been more frustrated if I had not been so excited to share my topic with others. I would highly recommend other students, if possible, to take plenty of time choosing a topic for long papers because writing a seven-page paper about something you have no genuine interest in is extremely challenging. Additionally, give yourself enough time to do research and write the paper. I spent about one week researching and one week writing. Cramming your writing into the last two days before the due date will likely result in a less organized paper. Finally, spend those last two or so days before the deadline proofreading and revising. As I write, I like to underline parts of the paper that I want to change later or find better wording for. This helps during the revision process. Having teachers, peers, and friends read your paper is also helpful because while you may know exactly what you want to say, others may have a harder time understanding. I probably read this paper to four of my friends before I submitted it, and they all gave feedback that is reflected in my final draft. In the end, the time, effort, and enthusiasm I put into this piece paid off; my final draft made me proud, and I believe it is one of my best works.

Halloween: Gender Roles, but Festive

On the surface, Halloween in the United States appears to be a holiday during which children and adults can transform themselves into whomever they want, even if this transcends typical roles in society. A costume can reflect the tastes, desires, and ideals of the wearer. Many, like myself, would argue against this innocent claim and assert that rather than freeing people from societal norms, Halloween costumes reinforce them, especially regarding gender stereotypes. Commercially-made Halloween costumes are made hyper-feminine or hyper-masculine and perpetuate the roles that men and women are forced into in society. They are also more sexualized for women than for men, indicating a societal expectation for women to wear suggestive clothing on Halloween. The prominence of such gender roles and stereotypes on Halloween is harmful especially to younger children but also to adults. In reality, commercially-made costumes say more about society as a whole than the individual wearer. Costume companies and parents who help choose their children's costumes should be mindful of these negative effects and create costumes that actively defy gender roles.

One of the most obvious characteristics of Halloween costumes is their overtly gendered nature. In other words, costumes are hyper-masculinized or hyper-feminized, especially among younger children. For young girls, costumes tend to be aimed at accentuating the beauty of the wearer by adding more “girly” features. Even costumes that are not stereotypically feminine in nature are given such “girly” additions. For example, if a little girl wants to be Batgirl, her commercially made costume is pink and includes a skirt, as seen in the picture from Target's website. It looks nothing like the real Batgirl, who possesses more masculine qualities, as shown below.



Figure 1: © Target. <https://www.target.com/p/dc-comics-girls-batgirl-costume/-/A-14165046>



Figure 2: Batgirl: A Matter of Family (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bago-games/19393898615>) by BagoGames is licenced under CC by 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>).

Dr. Adie Nelson, a sociology professor at the University of Waterloo, researched the trends in children's Halloween costumes by observing 469 of them from various stores and arranging them into categories. In her article, "The Pink Dragon Is Female: Halloween Costumes and Gender Markers," she discusses the stereotypes that prevail among gendered costumes. She writes, "It would seem that, for girls, glory is concentrated in the narrow realm of beauty queens, princesses, brides, or other exemplars of traditionally passive femininity" (Nelson 141). Females are restricted to costumes that not only feature beauty as the costume's main focus, but also imply that women are meant to take on more passive roles in society. Where men's costumes highlight adventure and achievement, women's costumes are primarily an opportunity to look cute or attractive. Nelson comments on this phenomenon when discussing her research, saying, "There's a whole range of very positive costumes for little boys that stress that you can get adventure, you can accomplish great things and have the right to. The equivalent costumes for girls still suggest if you're going to accomplish great things, it's going to be in relation to how well you look" (qtd. in Miller). Women's Halloween costumes statistically depict more passive roles than men, focusing instead on appearance. For example, women are more likely to be portrayed as inanimate objects and small animals or insects. In Nelson's study, 33.1% of female costumes were inanimate objects compared to men's 17.4% (Nelson 142). When men are depicted as inanimate objects or animals, they are often symbols of male aggression, dominance, or success. Therefore, boys can dress up as intelligent objects like computers while girls dress up as passive objects like butterflies and cupcakes. The gender divide in Halloween costumes is significant and potentially harmful to younger children whose gender schemas, or perceptions of gender identity, are still developing.

As females struggle to fit into the roles that Halloween costumes force them into, males also must deal with the hyper-masculinization of their costumes. The standard is that men must be strong, funny, dominant, and in control. In her article about the influence of Halloween costumes on society's perception of masculinity, Susan M. Alexander, a sociology professor at St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana, argues that "men's Halloween costumes embody the considerable power commercial culture has today in constructing images of masculinity in American culture" (Alexander 182). It is because of commercialism and the media that men and young boys are often associated with such aggressively "masculine" traits, as Halloween costumes reflect. Costumes for young boys, for example, often include large muscles, further perpetuating the expectation for boys to be physically robust. However, as difficult as it is for young boys to grow up with these expectations, they also harm females. In his TED talk "Bring on the Female Superheroes!" Christopher Bell, an assistant Media Studies professor at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, discusses his own daughter who is a "tomboy" and mentions that people will "think it's cute" and "call her feisty, because in our society, adding so-called male traits to girls is seen as an upgrade, seen as a bonus" (Bell). Assigning certain traits to each gender is harmful to everyone, male and female. Bell also reverses the conversation by discussing an 11-year-old boy named Mike

who committed suicide after being bullied for liking the show, “My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic” (Bell). Clearly, because of the perpetuation of gender stereotypes through the media and things like Halloween costumes, children feel that if they do not conform to the traits assigned to them by gender, they do not belong in the world. This myth must end.

These gender roles follow girls as they age into young women since another significant trend in Halloween costumes is the sexualization of women’s costumes and the expectation for women to dress in a more suggestive way than men. Not only do female costumes emphasize beauty, but they also often highlight beauty in a suggestive and sometimes highly risqué way. This trend is extremely prevalent in college, for example, but it also pervades commercially-made costumes for younger girls, even if the costume is not specifically meant to be alluring. Stephanie Rosenbloom, a writer for *The New York Times*, upon interviewing Christa Getsz, the purchasing director for BuyCostumes.com, discovered that about 90-95% of female costumes from BuyCostumes.com have a “flirty edge” to them. Rosenbloom even describes that “the sexy costumes are so popular the company had to break its ‘sexy’ category into three subdivisions this year” (Rosenbloom). Additionally, while a significant amount of women’s costumes are sexualized, most men’s costumes more accurately portray the character they are supposed to. For example, as seen in the photo below from Party City’s website, a male firefighter costume strongly resembles the uniform of a real firefighter. However, the woman’s “matching” costume is skin-tight and barely reminiscent of a firefighter. Many female costumes are even counterintuitive, sexualizing a role or character that makes no sense to be sexualized. For example, nerds are typically understood to be outcasts who are not normally physically attractive, yet female nerd costumes are made “sexy” by adding short-shorts and exposing parts of the body. In Figure 4, the man’s costume accurately takes away from his physical appearance while the woman’s costume attempts to add to it. Susan M. Alexander reports that in



Figure 3: © PartyCity. <https://www.partycity.com/adult-fired-up-firefighter-and-rescue-me-firefighter-couples-costumes-G628225.html>



Figure 4: © Halloweencostumes.com. <https://www.halloweencostumes.com/couples-costumes.aspx>

her study “only 4% of the men’s costumes were explicitly sexual” (Alexander 188). This trend gives proof of the importance of beauty for women, particularly sexual attractiveness. This issue with the push toward physical beauty is that it not only devalues those that society deems as “unattractive,” but it also objectifies women and emphasizes their roles as “eye-candy.”

Some may argue that these arguments are overstated. After all, people *can* freely choose their costumes and do not have to perpetuate gender roles if they do not want to. Additionally, a little girl wearing a pink, frilly costume seems harmless, as does a college freshman wearing a scandalous costume if she feels confident in it. As I was researching this topic, I described it to one of my friends who then said to me, “Well, some of us just like pink!” I also know many female college students who simply want to look attractive and feel desirable in their costumes. They value positive attention and claim there is nothing wrong with that. While I agree with these points to some degree, I believe they miss the point of my argument. I see no issue with dressing in a way that promotes self-confidence and a sense of pride for one’s body, but the media and commercial culture instill the idea into women that they have to be beautiful or attractive in order to succeed. Halloween costumes further bolster this notion by creating unrealistic costumes that focus on beauty rather than any other more important value, such as ambition or independence. This is especially harmful since men’s costumes, in contrast, do promote characteristics that are universally valued. The sexualization of female costumes is dangerous because it encourages the objectification of women and the attitude that women are meant to be looked at in a sexual and sometimes disrespectful way. The perpetuation of gender roles also creates expectations for members of each gender, and these expectations can be restricting. Carol J. Auster, a sociologist at Franklin and Marshall College, reports, “If you drop the gender marketing, rather than narrowing a set of interests based on gender, it widens the possibility for the child to pursue interests that he or she cares about and has a talent for” (qtd. in Miller). When they are younger, children’s brains are more susceptible to change and formation, so ingraining gender roles into them at such a young age can influence their beliefs about their own abilities and roles in the world. At Penn State University, Lynn Liben and Lacey Hilliard studied the effects of gender distinction on preschool students. After just two weeks, the students who were distinguished by gender by lining them up separately and other tactics “were much more likely to hold stereotypical beliefs about whether men and women should be in traditionally male or female occupations, and spent much less time playing with peers of the opposite sex” (Miller). Clearly, while the male-female divide may seem harmless, it actually limits people’s potential to succeed.

The portrayal of gender roles in Halloween costumes and the increasing sexualization of female costumes is prevalent and detrimental to the self-image of the wearers of these costumes. The consequences of gender stereotypes are not always obvious to those who hold such beliefs or preconceptions, which is why many may claim that they are harmless. However, they can result in

sexism, male supremacy, unreachd potential, and a continued compulsion for beauty. Halloween should be a time for imagination, ambition, and freedom to guide Halloween costume choices, but instead, the media and gender roles make Halloween a time to reinforce the status quo. At the end of Nelson's article on gendered Halloween costumes, she encourages parents to actively defy such gender roles while helping their children decide on Halloween costumes by "dressing a male in a pink, ready-to-wear butterfly costume or a female as Fred Flinstone" (Nelson 143). In doing so, parents transform Halloween from a time of mere "festive" gender roles to a time of reassurance that their children can truly be whatever they want to be. This rising above gender norms reminds us of the true spirit of Halloween.

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Questions to Consider

1. Samantha chose to use images to accompany her argument to show the reader examples of the gendered costumes she was discussing in the paper. How did the images help support her argument? Would the argument have been as strong without these images? What kind of rhetorical appeal do you think arises in response to these images? What other images might she have chosen, and would they have worked as well?
2. While the reader first hears about the sexualized and feminized nature of costumes for females, Samantha also discusses how men are likewise stereotyped by many premade commercially available costumes. What is the rhetorical effect of including both men and women in this analysis? Is this inclusion linked to the intended audience for this piece? Who do you think is included in that audience? Who might be excluded? How can you tell?
3. Samantha mentions that she talked to various people about this project or questioned them about the gendered nature of many costumes. While these moments also act as a counter-argument for her position, what else is added to her argument by including outside perspectives that are different from hers in this essay? How might this work to create identification with her audience? Do you, as a reader, agree with Samantha that costume makers should “create costumes that actively defy gender roles?” Why or why not?

Category: Rhetorical Analysis

The next genre of writing we will explore is the Rhetorical Analysis, which is a type of analytic approach for interpreting texts, which focuses on rhetorical appeals that work to persuade an audience. As discussed in the “Rhetorical Terms and Appeals” section near the beginning of this book, rhetoric examines particular aspects of persuasive texts in order to understand how they work. In a rhetorical analysis, you will be asked to analyze texts—which could be magazine ads, editorials, political speeches, images, videos, newspaper articles, commercials, or a host of other types of texts—from a rhetorical perspective.

While students often have background with analysis prior to coming to college, many first-year writers report that the rhetorical analysis is a new genre for them. Because of that, examples of this type of essay may be helpful to you so that you can get an idea of what might be expected in an analysis of this sort. Although your instructor may have specific guidelines and types of assignments that are different from the examples you see here, all rhetorical analyses ask the writer to investigate a text to see how it operates rhetorically. You might consider aspects of a text such as pathos (how the text moves the emotions of the audience), ethos (the authority or character of the speaker/writer), and logos (how logically an argument is presented), as well as the timing of the text you are critiquing, the context in which it was published or distributed, the audience for which it was intended, the style or tone it takes in order to connect with the audience, etc. By engaging in rhetorical analysis, you will become more aware of the rhetorical texts around you in your everyday life and be able to discern the ways in which you are persuaded. Additionally, through this awareness, you can learn to craft more rhetorically effective texts yourself, as you will when you create various arguments as part of your classroom assignments.

Both of the students whose rhetorical analysis papers appear in this year’s edition of *The Write Path* explore articles discussing the #MeToo movement, analyzing the way writers have critiqued various aspects of that movement or advocated caution in the way it was presented publicly. Both of these essays demonstrate that a rhetorical analysis is possible—and helpful—regardless of one’s stance on a particular issue. When exploring public controversies, it is important to be able to analyze the rhetorical appeals of texts you both agree and disagree with and to assess where, how, and why an author is putting forth a particular claim. To analyze, one does not have to necessarily take a position or state an opinion, but rather should be able to stand back from an argument and understand how it works.

In our first selection, “Behind Closed Doors: A Rhetorical Analysis Of Daphne Merkin’s Op-Ed On The #MeToo Movement’s Flaws and Societal Impact,” Shaan Dahar analyzes an article positing that there is a difference in the way people publicly engage with #MeToo versus how they discuss it in private. In Shaan’s analysis, he notes how the author of this article infuses her appeals with ethos so that her argument comes off as credible and appealing to readers, whether they agree or disagree with the movement. In the second selection, “Rhetorical Analysis of ‘The Limits of ‘Believe All Women,’” Gabby Sparro analyzes the tone, logic, and credibility of the author to critique some aspects of the #MeToo movement, including how the author appeals to the rights of both men and women in the piece.

As you read these essays, note the way that Shaan and Gabby highlight aspects of the texts they are analyzing, showing how these texts work to persuade, engage, and move a reader to hold a particular point of view, take a certain action, or consider a new perspective. When you begin to analyze texts rhetorically, you will become more aware of how you are persuaded, as well as how you use rhetorical appeals in your own everyday life.

Behind Closed Doors: A Rhetorical Analysis Of Daphne Merkin's Op-Ed On The #MeToo Movement's Flaws and Societal Impact

Shaan Dahar

D'Artagnan Award Honorable Mention

Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

I have been learning more about movements like #MeToo since the midway point of high school; this was around the time our current president won the election, and the political landscape had become as polarized as water molecules. I had initially stuck to left-leaning sources but found some right-wing speakers online who I started following very closely. I fell into a rabbit hole of anti-SJW, anti-feminist videos, and took a turn towards anti-self because of it. Once I realized what I was doing, I decided to stay as unbiased as possible by using sources from both sides to inform myself on topics, so going into this op-ed, I was worried that it may lean towards one side unfairly. After skimming the article, I was more positive about this paper; the writer was taking time to appeal to all sides of the debate, and it showed in the quality of the writing. I was more invested in the paper, and thus seriously dove into the rhetorical prowess that Daphne Merkin was utilizing.

I didn't go into this analysis initially focusing on the specific ethos, logos, and pathos. When I look at an op-ed or article and I'm asked to analyze it, I usually start by outlining the piece and taking notes on the message. Then, I use the notes to articulate why each detail of the article works in favor of said message and/or how it is implemented. After all of this, I will look up what rhetorical devices these notes I've taken describe, and then start writing the paper. The writing and articulation of my notes into a longer form comes very quickly if I have my thoughts already organized, so this draft was a quick one to create, but I'm still proud of it, and I hope you get something out of it, dear reader.

Behind Closed Doors: A Rhetorical Analysis Of Daphne Merkin's Op-Ed On The #MeToo Movement's Flaws and Societal Impact

Despite the apparent outpouring of support for the #MeToo Movement that has taken social media and—as a direct result—all of America by storm, opinions of the movement's methods and cultural impact have started to sour behind closed doors, according to Daphne Merkin. On January 5th, 2018, Merkin, a writer for *The New York Times* who writes on everything from movie reviews to stories on depression, published an opinion piece titled “Publicly, We Say #MeToo. Privately, We Have Misgivings.” In it, she details the conflicts that many acquaintances, including supporters of the movement, have privately aired out, tries to understand the root issues of society that necessitated the #MeToo Movement and gave way to many of its flaws, and attempts to offer a solution to some of these issues while warning against the direction that America's culture is going in. Merkin's Op-Ed is effective in achieving its goals of informing the reader about these ideas thoroughly through its use of pathos, ethos, and logos.

Merkin's first two paragraphs are a great illustration of how she uses pathos and perspective to appeal to and draw in audiences who harbor opposite opinions on the movement. The initial paragraph is written for those who are bothered by the injection of half-baked politics into entertainment, most likely people who do not support the #MeToo Movement; a clear indicator of who the paragraph is addressed to is in the tone: “Hollywood celebrities, not exactly known for their independent thinking, will turn the red carpet into a #MeToo moment replete with designer duds” (Merkin). There is an air of annoyed indifference or even boredom in the way Merkin describes the hypotheticals of how the Golden Globes will be marred by politics, and the description of how the everyday Americans watching along on social media will interact with these events feels robotic and detached. The second paragraph brings that hinted-at discontent with the movement into the spotlight, switching to a more appropriate, personal perspective. This heightened disdain that accompanies the new perspective—which Merkin associates with the usually pro-#MeToo crowd of feminists—shows that two sides which seem polar opposite can agree on this topic, thus hooking both the movement's supporters and opposition. The focus shifting from the concerns of detached actors to those of relatable, regular people is reflected by the subject of the paragraph transitioning from superficial complaints to deeply considered issues with the movement; an issue like “the reflexive and unnuanced sense of outrage” (Merkin) is much more grounded and serious than the qualms with Meryl Streep's knowledge on Harvey Weinstein.

Any writer can throw in pathos in an op-ed to try and gain sympathy from the audience, but if it isn't from a credible source it means nothing. Merkin must have acknowledged this when writing the piece, because ethos is bursting from the multiple anecdotes and experiences cited in the article, and it is again utilized to appeal to the two opposing audiences. Merkin quotes her feminist friends on their complaints about the movement and specifically uses those that are similar to arguments made against the movement by its detractors: Where

is the due process? Why aren't women aggressors being called out as often as male aggressors? A specific example Merkin uses is the story of two young activists petitioning to get a painting removed for its depiction of a young girl, a campaign she describes as "the kind of censorship practiced by religious zealots" (Merkin). The following paragraph utilizes ethos differently by contrasting the public vs. personal dynamic through women's experiences of harassment:

I hear story after story of adult women who helplessly acquiesce to sexual demands. I find it especially curious given that a majority of women I know have been in situations in which men have come on to them—at work or otherwise. They have routinely said, "I'm not interested" or "Get your hands off me right now." And they've taken the risk that comes with it. (Merkin)

Once again, the popular accounts, possibly those of celebrities, feel detached and unrealistic in comparison to those of Merkin's friends in the workplace. This pattern reinforces the credibility of Merkin and her friends while corroding the trustworthiness of the celebrities and figureheads of the movement.

Merkin uses this point to transition into her own thoughts on how the movement can better itself by addressing the flaws of the logic behind the movement. The most effective logos that Merkin utilizes in the article is not in the deconstruction of the logic—though that usage is important—but in the article's structure and sequence. The article's themes are like a gradient; a glance at the movement's superficial effects at the start of the piece give way to a critique of traditional gender roles, society's impact on gender relations, and the implications of that impact. However, Merkin doesn't just explicitly discuss society's shifting opinion on sex; she implements a secondary gradient to illustrate society's specific shift from expression to oppression of sex. The article initially looks at how celebrities and people express sexual feelings or their opinions on sex, but then arrives at how people censor and oppress those feelings and opinions, drawing a parallel between the article and the culture's shift towards subjugation. Merkin warns readers that, "These are scary times, for women as well as men. There is an inquisitorial whiff in the air, and my particular fear is that in true American fashion, all subtlety and reflection is being lost. Next we'll be torching people for the content of their fantasies" (Merkin).

Daphne Merkin's Op-Ed effectively utilizes the rhetorical devices of ethos, logos, and pathos by citing anecdotes and experiences from fellow female workers and feminists, analyzing the logic behind aspects of the #MeToo movement while taking them to their extremes over the course of the article and utilizing specific emotions and tones when speaking about different aspects of the movement respectively. The article is written in such a way that it appeals to both supporters and detractors of the movement, as well as both genders, by switching between perspectives and then combining them by the final paragraphs. It also illustrates its main points of seemingly superficial problems being symptoms of deep-seated societal issues and our modern culture moving to oppose sexual expression by utilizing a gradual tonal shift throughout the Op-Ed by emulating both of these changes in their subject matter.

Work Cited

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Questions to Consider

1. Any rhetorical analysis should consider how the piece under analysis works to convince or connect with its audience. In this essay, Shaan says that the author "uses pathos and perspective to appeal to and draw in audiences who harbor opposite opinions on the movement" as one means of explaining how audience comes into the construction of this article. When you read a persuasive article, do you consider the intended audience? How can you tell to whom an argument is directed? How might different audiences respond to the same argument in various ways? How do persuasive writers handle writing to multiple audiences? How do you consider audience when you write an argument?
2. All effective essays use transitions and topic sentences to keep their readers on track and focused on the main idea. How does Shaan use transitional sentences between ideas? What tone comes through the writing in these sentences? How does this affect your reading of this essay and how you perceive its writer?
3. Speaking of audience and tone, who do you think is the imagined audience for this essay? How can you tell? Do you feel as though you are part of that audience? Why or why not? What specific words and phrases lead you to that perception?

Rhetorical Analysis of “The Limits of ‘Believe All Women’”

Gabby Sparro

D’Artagnan Award Honorable Mention

Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

As a young woman in 2018, the #MeToo movement has always fascinated me. I am ecstatic that we are moving towards a day where no woman has to live in a constant state of fear over being sexually harassed. I am also someone who is very honest. I have always found it distasteful when a woman, for any reason, lied about being assaulted or raped. I know women who have experienced sexual assault; they are deeply affected by these types of people.

Researching this article made me relieved because I am not alone in my distaste of those who lie or exaggerate their experiences around this very sensitive subject. I hope people will learn from those people’s mistakes and find other means in order to sustain and grow the movement.

“You know this article is very complicated, right?” Those were the words my father declared over the phone when I sent him the article I had chosen for this assignment. I sucked in my breath, wondering if I could actually complete this assignment and get a high grade. I slowly began writing the outline, which was the hardest part for me due to the fact I dislike writing outlines. Once I got the feedback from my professor, I began to write out my rough draft. Once that was completed, I sent my paper to my three editors. My first editor was Grammarly, an application you can download for your computer that checks grammar and spelling; it caught the little mistakes that I didn’t even notice. My second editor was the Writing Help Center, who helped me come up with better versions of my final two paragraphs. My third and final editor was my partner for the peer review. Having multiple people read over my essay helped me get a clear direction for the focus of my submission as a final draft.

Rhetorical Analysis of "The Limits of 'Believe All Women'"

The #MeToo Movement will go down in history as a fantastic civil resistance movement along with women's suffrage and Gandhi's Satyagraha; however, the issues raised by #MeToo are very complex and prompt many questions. Just like civil resistance movements before it, ideas and ideologies have come about in hopes of solving the problem completely. One of these ideologies is "Believe All Women." Journalist Bari Weiss fears this particular belief could do much more harm than good. Through utilizing personal language, a plethora of examples, and capitalizing on her identity, Weiss successfully makes an argument that goes against the grain of society.

Weiss' language in this piece is very complex; she both uses personal language and advocates for men. She uses many I's as if she's speaking directly to the reader, making you feel as if you're having a conversation with her. It makes talking about such a controversial topic less intimidating. She later compares the belief to a savage call: "The huntresses' war cry—'believe all women'—has felt like a bracing corrective to a historic injustice" (Weiss). She calls this attack against all men a hunt. She compares it to something primitive to affirm that this line of thinking is for the uneducated and reckless. She wants us to realize that there are good men out there, along with bad women.

Throughout the entire article, Weiss displays logos by using examples to show the consequences of people following through with just believing women. She first says, "But the Duke lacrosse moment, the Rolling Stone moment, will come" (Weiss). She only briefly mentions these cases because they've been talked about more than enough—they are not the issue on the table. The issue is that there are women who make false accusations and that not all women are truthful. The next example she uses is "*The Washington Post* reported that a woman named Jaime Phillips approached the paper with a story about Roy Moore. She claimed that in 1992, when she was 15, he impregnated her and then he drove her to Mississippi to have an abortion. Not a lick of her story is true" (Weiss). The woman, feeling no remorse for her actions, claimed she was attempting to expose the "bias" in *The Washington Post* (Weiss). Roy Moore is already under investigation for sexual assault, and a stunt like this only hurts his victims. False accusations in general cause us to go backwards and doubt all victims. Weiss later talks about how Melanie Morgan accused Al Franken of stalking her. Many people such as Breitbart, Laura Ingraham, and Rush Limbaugh jumped on her story and magnified it. It was later revealed that he only called her three times (Weiss). It's ineffective to say exaggerations only benefit the accused because that's a well-known fact. Weiss goes into more detail about the people who believed Morgan to show that they are the ones at fault. These people only believed her because she was a woman, which is a realization that makes the audience angry. It makes them want to change this kind of thinking.

Weiss exemplifies ethos in this article mostly because she herself is a female advocating for men's rights during the #MeToo movement. This alone contrasts the criticism the article has gotten. Weiss' criticism of these women isn't to say all women are liars; rather, she is trying to keep women human. She claims that this movement is making women the "Truth personified" (Weiss). It is ironic because these women are trying to fight against men who objectify women for their own pleasure. Her straight-to-the-fact writing can make some people uncomfortable, but it is necessary. Like the #MeToo movement, Weiss is not trying to sugarcoat anything she is saying so that people will listen. The article is complicated but in a good way.

Ultimately, Weiss uses each device to convince her readers that we shouldn't just believe women because they are women. She even ends her article with a compromise: "Trust but verify" (Weiss). Already, changes on how we address sexual assault have been appearing at college campuses, places of work, and social gatherings. Weiss is creating the line, so we can have a better future.

Work Cited

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Questions to Consider

1. One area of rhetorical analysis essays that students often struggle with is in crafting a thesis statement that gives an overview of the upcoming analysis in a focused and specific way. However, it is possible to create thesis statements that make an "analytic argument" about the piece under consideration. After reading through Gabby's paper, how else might you craft a thesis statement that provides specific details about this analysis? What information does Gabby cover in her essay? How could that be incorporated into a focused thesis statement?
2. One area that Gabby analyzes is the "personal language" contained in the original article. How does the way a writer addresses the audience change the audience's response? What might be the point of using "I" in an article a lot, versus taking a more objective third-person perspective? How do you respond to various ways of addressing the reader in the persuasive arguments you read?
3. In this article, Gabby notes that part of the ethos of the writer comes from her being a woman and writing about this topic. How much does positionality affect the credibility of a writer? Are you more likely to be persuaded by certain writers rather than others? How can you know if a writer has "inside knowledge" of an issue? When you write, how do you establish your ethos with readers?

Category: Narrative

You may be assigned a narrative in your ENGL 101 or 115 courses, though it may be called by different names. Some genres that incorporate this form of writing include personal narratives, narrative arguments, and ethnographies. In all cases, a narrative will tell a story and typically ask you to write in first person, addressing your audience as “I.” Unlike more formal academic writing, narratives use vivid description and words that evoke emotion in readers, painting a picture of a situation or feeling so that your readers have the sense of “being there” when you tell your story.

Narratives can serve a variety of purposes in ENGL 101 and 115, and assignments involving narrative may vary greatly from class to class. *Personal narratives* may require you to tell a story of some aspect of your life, placing yourself with a certain cultural context, or ask you to examine an important event in your life that has shaped who you are today. An *ethnography*, which is typically an examination of a people and their culture, may be written about yourself as a type of narrative. In this case, an assignment might require you to take a step back from your everyday assumptions and question your own cultural practices, applying an analytic lens to your own life the way an anthropologist would examine a less familiar society. A *narrative argument* uses story to make an argument where the narrative serves as a representative anecdote to illustrate a larger issue. While each of these types of assignments serves a different purpose, in all cases you would use story, description, dialog, and a first-person perspective in your writing.

Both the essays in the Narrative section deal with issues that confront many young people when they realize that gender roles and cultural messages about sexualization of women may not be fair or equitable to everyone. In the first essay, Cameron Bogans offers an honest account of a difficult lesson he learned about what is and is not appropriate treatment of women. As his title, “A Conversation Starter,” suggests, these are issues that we *should* be talking about, though doing so—especially when it means expressing vulnerability or mistakes—is often difficult to do. The next essay, “Hidden Within School Walls,” shows what it is like to be a young woman in today’s society, where females are often still held accountable for male behavior and attitudes. In this essay, Rachel Cutter talks about how it felt to be in that position, a narrative she uses to ultimately argue for a revision of public school dress codes because the way they operate now objectifies maturing young women. In both of these essays, the writers use their personal experience to illustrate larger issues in our society, disclosing stories that they lived through first-hand, in order to encourage dialog, change, and greater equality for all.

In your ENGL 101 or 115 classes, you may have the opportunity to write a narrative of some kind, and while your particular assignment may differ from these examples, there are guidelines of storytelling you can take away from the essays written by Cameron and Rachel. As you read, notice how they tell their

stories—what details they give, how you react or feel when you read, and the effects of their descriptions—and then remember these concepts when you craft your own narratives. We all tell stories in our lives everyday, whether as an official assignment or not. Storytelling is an important aspect of culture and social interaction, and learning to craft an effective narrative in your writing gives you the opportunity to tell your story to wider audiences.

A Conversation Starter

Cameron Bogans

D'Artagnan Award Honorable Mention

Personal Narrative

Reflection

The moment my professor gave the prompt to write a personal narrative about sexual abuse, I immediately thought about this story. I tried to write about anything else, but this was the only thing I could think about, so I gave in and wrote it. It was definitely challenging to write; the most challenging aspect being not giving too many details but still telling the entire story. I also couldn't write this paper the way I'm used to writing long written assignments. Normally, I plan out my papers with a detailed outline before truly writing my rough draft, but for this paper, I had to sit down and focus on getting everything that happened on paper, and then edit it later. So, I wrote my zero draft, revised it myself, and then took it to the writing center to be reviewed and revised before finally submitting it.

Most of the revisions I did had to do with the paper's organization. I tried to be as thorough as I could to make the story flow and find a good place to transition into my argument. I would later go to the writing center to have my grammar and mechanics reviewed. Normally, I don't like to open up and get this personal, both in my writing and in my everyday conversation, but I felt obligated to do it this time. I recognize that not many men in my position speak about these things and share this kind of perspective when engaging in conversations concerning sexual discrimination and abuse. So, while my experience isn't one that I'm fond of, through this narrative, I have found a new level of appreciation of it.

A Conversation Starter

All I can do is simply tell my story as I remember it and let you take what you will from it. It is one I hate, but it is mine nonetheless. So, without further adieu, this is my honest story. It is about the time I sexually assaulted my friend. Now understand, I don't tell this story for the sake of telling it. I do it because my actions, in part, were due to my lack of education and conversation on the topics of sexual abuse and sexual expression growing up. Often times, adults had taught me that sexual interactions of any kind were wrong or hinted that they are something that should be shied away from. I wasn't taught how to express these emotions and desires in healthy or mature ways, so when I finally did, I made mistakes that I can't take back. After my experiences, I believe that we as a society would benefit from initiating conversations surrounding sexual abuse and expression with young men during their pre-adolescent years. These aren't conversations we should dance around, especially for young men.

It was my sophomore year of high school. It was the second month of school, so everyone had already gotten out of that phase of being excited to see each other while simultaneously dreading the school work and nights of little sleep. I had come to enjoy my daily routine, and my classes weren't too hard. I had many friends, so I was constantly surrounded by people I knew and liked, and I had a lot of free time at home. Though, my favorite part of the day wasn't actually being at home; it was riding the bus. I loved the bus. Some of my closest friends were there, so we got to be loud and obnoxious, play music on our speakers, and whatever else we wanted for the duration of our ride. The bus was also where I got to see her, Raquel. We met at the beginning of our freshman year and clicked pretty fast. I had a crush on her at that time, and she knew it too. At the time, I knew that she also had feelings for me, but I was too scared to act on them, so when she got a boyfriend at the end of freshman year, I had nothing to be surprised about. I didn't shoot my shot, so it was my own fault. Though by the time sophomore year rolled around, my friend revealed to me that over the summer, she had just recently broken up with her boyfriend. Needless to say, I was excited. I wanted a second chance and now I had one, so I started talking to her more often and made plans to ask her out. Every year, the county held a fair that lasted for two weeks. It was one of those places that everyone could go to regardless of age. I told myself, "That's where I want to take her," but I never did get the chance.

I was walking toward my third period class that day when I saw Raquel standing at her locker trading textbooks from her locker to her book bag; I went over to say hi. I don't remember what we talked about, just that we were entertaining a quick conversation and enjoying each other's company. I playfully teased her about something, and she responded with a playful slap to the face (it was kind of hard, but honestly at that time, she could've hit me with a broomstick, and I still would've reacted the same). "Do that again, and I'll smack you back when we get back on the bus," I replied with a smirk. "You won't get the chance. I'm driving my own car now," she said as she walked away. *Damn*. I was looking forward to catching her on the bus, but I guess it didn't matter. It's not like I was confined to one place to talk to her, though I was disappointed that I wouldn't get my chance to prove her wrong. Except that I did. And sadly, for the both of us, I took it.

About 2 hours later, I was walking to my last class of the day with my best friend Devin and as we're conversing, we saw Raquel and her friends walking in our direction toward the building we had just exited. I knew her friends well; they were mine too, but not like they were to Raquel. They were more like inseparable sisters. As they made their way closer, I smirked and raised my hand, as if to signal for a high-five, and then right as she passed me, I let my hand fall down, and I smacked Raquel right on the butt. I didn't turn around to see her reaction. I didn't hear her friends react. I just kept walking with Devin, smiling and laughing at him hollering and laughing over what I did. To the two

of us, it was nothing more than a laughing matter. To me personally, I was just flirting and showing affection. To Raquel and her friends, my action meant something much different.

To my surprise, not long after I got on that bus, Raquel soon followed after and sat two seats in front of me, not looking at me, not saying a word. I didn't get the hint. Not long after, the bus started moving. I got up and sat next to her, and before I could get much out, she flashed me a look I had never seen from her. She wasn't just mad; she was *pissed*. She told me to get the hell away, and when I asked why she told me. "First you slap me like that right in front of my friends, and now you wanna come over here as if nothing happened?! You didn't say sorry or even bother to check and see how I felt about that!" She told me to go away again, and this time I listened. I was speechless and very confused. *Why was she so angry at me? Was what I did so wrong?* From the time I was little, I had seen dozens of men slap their girlfriends and wives on the behind. I had seen my father do it, babysitters, and various people on TV do it. So, what made this so different? At that time, I couldn't see it, yet it didn't stop me from sending her a paragraph-long apology text and trying to call. I didn't understand what I did, but I knew that I was sorry that I hurt her feelings. I didn't know how to fix this, so I did something I hated and asked for my mother's advice.

She listened as I explained the situation. My mother had worked as a police officer and had taught criminal law for years, so she had seen and heard much worse than I was telling her, but still, I didn't know how she was taking my story in. Her expression was very neutral, neither calm, nor angry, but I knew she was putting on a poker face to keep me talking. Normally, I wouldn't tell her any of this, but this was important to me. Raquel wasn't just a love interest; she was my friend too. When I finished she stated the obvious: "You messed up." *Thanks*. She explained to me that what I did was sexual assault and that even though we were friends, that didn't excuse what I did. She further explained to me what sexual assault and harassment were and that they were legal offenses as well. She also explained that Raquel had every right and reason to report me. "Well if she did report me, then would that mean I'd be a labeled sex offender?" I asked. And my mother looked at me and said, "Whether or not she does, it doesn't change the fact that you did it, and even if she doesn't, her and her friends might still look at you that way," This was my first time having a conversation on this subject. No one had ever talked to me about sexual assault or harassment before. The closest conversation I'd ever had to it was being warned to stay away from sex offenders, and now I was being told that I was one. It hurt to hear that.

While I do own my mistakes, this shouldn't have been my first conversation about sexual abuse and sexual expression, but the craziest thing is that I'm not alone. There are many guys who were like me and didn't have these conversations until more recently, when sexual discrimination became a much more popular conversation in the wake of the #MeToo movement. These

teachings are more often taught to girls, whereas boys learn them with time. This is something we need to change. Now, coming from a Southern Baptist Christian background, I understand the irony and difficulty in teaching an adolescent about appropriate sexual behavior, especially because Baptists tend to preach abstinence, but it needs to be done. At the same time, I also understand that these topics are very complex and difficult to talk about, especially with children. However, doubt or religious beliefs shouldn't be used as an excuse to withhold valuable information from anyone, especially a child that needs it. When boys aren't taught how to appropriately seek out or express their desires, they mimic behavior that they observe from other men, thus continuing the cycle of ignorance and masculine toxicity currently alive. Adult men and women collaboratively need to start having real conversations with young boys about sexual expression and abuse. If you are one of the many people who want to help change the culture and create a safer environment for women and young girls, it starts and ends with the education of young boys.

Questions to Consider

1. While we may not always consider how titles work to frame a story, essay, or argument, because it is the first piece of information a reader encounters, it can have an impact on how readers interpret the information they find in the rest of the piece. Even before Cameron's narrative begins, his title hints at what is to come or how he hopes readers will react to his story. How does the title of this essay frame your understanding of the narrative, even before you read it? How does the title work rhetorically? Can you think of other titles that might also work to get across this message? How might changing the title completely lead to a different reading of this narrative?
2. In a personal narrative, the ethos of the speaker can be a very important aspect of how an audience reads a story. In this narrative, Cameron discusses a mistake he made in a way that, hopefully, sparks more dialog and encourages other people to reflect upon their actions. How does this influence your perception of the writer? How is ethos established in a narrative that reflects honesty, courage, and difficult truths? What specific words or phrases can you find in this narrative that help to establish the ethos of this writer?
3. This narrative begins with an introductory paragraph, followed by the story itself, and ends with a concluding paragraph. How does the framing of this story affect what the audience takes away from it? How would this story change if the introduction and conclusion were omitted? What is the purpose, then, of the introductory and concluding paragraphs in this narrative? How do these elements work rhetorically?

Hidden Within School Walls

Rachel Cutter

D'Artagnan Award Honorable Mention

Narrative Argument

Reflection

Prior to writing this paper, I had never written a narrative argument essay. Due to my lack of experience, I was very stuck where to even start. I overcame this obstacle by thinking back to a childhood experience that shaped the way I now think, act, and live my life. Once the flashbulb memory of being publicly humiliated emerged from my brain, it was easy to connect it to the greater social issue I was a part of. I feel like the memories that stick with you are there for a reason, so I used it to bring light to a social issue.

The most difficult aspect of writing this paper was overcoming my fear of failure and public embarrassment. Writing about a relatively controversial subject, in a society where being a feminist is stigmatized, I felt a solid amount of concern to share my paper with my classmates. This paper was the first time I openly expressed my feelings towards equality for women, which I must admit felt like a weight had been lifted off of my shoulders. I had never considered myself a feminist, instead just a young adult who had experienced a first-hand act of inequality. On the day of in-class peer editing, I was plagued with fear. I believed that the male student editing my paper would automatically assume I was an extremist and begin to think of me negatively. In reality, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that he completely agreed with my argument. He expressed that he never realized this inequality was occurring because as a male, he never was forced to experience it. This small realization from a peer made me feel an immense amount of accomplishment and appreciation for my willingness to go outside of my comfort zone.

My advice to future students is to use writing as a way to put yourself out there and allow yourself to grow. College is a place that gives you all the necessary resources to flourish into the person you want to and are meant to be. I am very pleased with myself for putting my fears aside and writing this paper. I gained not only confidence, but trust in myself and my abilities. My biggest advice is to find what you are passionate about and use the beauty of writing to make your voice heard.

Hidden Within School Walls

In my opinion, August was always the most scorching month in Ohio. When my 7th grade year of school started in late August, I chose to wear clothing that was appropriate for the hot weather. I strutted into my middle school wearing a pair of blue jean shorts and a floral V-neck tee-shirt, an outfit that I had worn all summer long without any issues. I felt comfortable in my weather-friendly outfit and confident in myself. When I got to math class, I opened my notebook and began writing down the practice problem on the board. While minding my own business, I was suddenly interrupted with a stern summon from the teacher to come over to her desk. Her facial expression screamed irritation as she stood at her desk with her arms crossed. I immediately stood up and nervously shuffled over to the teacher, wondering what I possibly could have done. She quickly lectured me, stating that I was interrupting her class with the outfit I chose to wear to school today. I looked at the teacher in utter confusion and glanced down at my outfit. When my eyes met back with hers, they had already welled with tears. She grabbed my shoulders and urged me into the direction of the main office. I quickly ran out to the direction of the door as all 25 of my classmates stared and whispered. Once I arrived at the office, the nurse immediately handed me a pair of boys athletic shorts that were picked directly from the lost and found. She informed me that I was not to wear running shorts, yoga pants, or tank tops of any kind ever again because they are against the school's dress code. This thoroughly confused me considering it was the middle of the summer, and I was not allowed to wear weather-appropriate clothing. "Boys will be boys sweetie, we can't have them distracted by you" she said as if the whole situation did not just destroy my fragile self-esteem. I missed a total of two class periods, received a detention, and experienced public humiliation that day for the sole reason that my shorts were a few inches too short. During this time in my life, I was unaware of what sexism was and did not know how to stick up for myself. This seemingly meaningless act of objectification made me feel worthless and confused. Outdated strict dress codes target young women and force them to be a "distraction" to boys rather than an equal student. Public schools need to modify their out-of-date dress codes because of how they are sexist in nature and aimed at objectifying young women.

Public schools need to revise their dress codes because of their aim at objectifying maturing girls. The main goal of a school dress code is to limit specific areas of the body from being visible to limit "distractions" among other students. These rules are primarily targeted towards the female body, labeling her anatomy as a distraction to her other classmates. This consequently objectifies her because she is labeled as an object rather than an equal student. Sarah Schriener from Syracuse University wrote, "Teaching girls at such an impressionable age that they must cover up certain parts of their body because

they will be perceived sexually, leaves the impression that women, even at the youngest high school ages of fourteen and fifteen, are seen and acknowledged primarily on their sexuality, and not as whole human beings" (Schriner). While covering body parts such as the genitals are obviously important to maintain adherence to basic laws, schools often oversexualize parts of the female body that are innocent. Areas such as shoulders and thighs are seen as sexual areas because males could potentially be attracted to them. This limits girls from wearing comfortable and realistic clothing and furthers the objectification of women. By teaching impressionable girls that their bodies are just road blocks in her male peers' education, schools are instilling the mindset that the female anatomy is something to be ashamed of and hidden. This is also further teaching boys that it is okay to objectify girls and see them only for their sexual capacity. Laura Bates from *Time* wrote, "This sends an incredibly powerful message. It teaches our children that girls' bodies are dangerous, powerful and sexualized, and that boys are biologically programmed to objectify and harass them. It prepares them for college life, where as many as *one in five women* is sexually assaulted but society will blame and question and silence them, while perpetrators are rarely disciplined"(Bates). Body shaming and objectification are degrading and damaging acts that should not be present in a "safe" learning environment. Instead of disciplining a male for not controlling himself and his actions, a female is taught that her body is the real issue because she is just seen as a sexual object. Instilling this mindset and over sexualizing the female body is why school dress codes need to be modernized.

Public schools need to alter their dress codes because of their sexist aim at young girls. Although rules are important in a school setting, dress codes typically are way too strict and are targeted at the female students. Often, dress codes limit clothing that are culturally designed for women. According to Li Zhou from *The Atlantic*, "In the U.S., *over half of public schools* have a dress code, which frequently outline gender-specific policies. Some administrators see these distinctions as necessary because of the different ways in which girls and boys dress. In many cases, however, female-specific policies account for a disproportionate number of the attire rules included in school handbooks" (Zhou). Majority of dress code related punishments are given to the female students because of how sexist they can be. They typically limit clothing such as leggings, shorts above the knee line, tank tops, skirts, or shirts that are too tight. Basically, limiting a majority of the feminine clothing that is offered. Since policies are aimed at hiding the female body, male students are not affected by the rules. This makes many dress code policies sexist and unfair for female students because the policies don't apply to every student at the school. Dress codes are also sexist because of how they are enforced to protect male students' education yet take away a female right in the process. Since the goal of these policies is to limit distracting male students, the pressure is put onto the girls to hide their bodies rather than punishing boys for not controlling themselves. Stephanie Wang from *USA Today* wrote, "At a time of heightened national concern over

sexual harassment, some are asking whether school dress codes sexualize and objectify girls in a way that unfairly shifts blame onto them. They say even a bare shoulder can be seen as a distraction that boys can't be expected to endure. Critics of these types of dress codes say that same message, in its most extreme state, is what leads some to blame women and girls who are victims of sexual assault: "*Well, what was she wearing? Was she asking for it?*" (Wang). To protect the male students, they will remove a girl from the class room, give her punishments, take time away from class for her to change, or even send her home. Doing this takes away from the time she should be learning at school, which prioritizes male education. School dress codes need to be altered to apply to all students rather than be sexist towards the female students.

Of course, students cannot be strolling through the halls wearing offensive or excessively revealing clothing. A male or female student should not be allowed to attend school without a shirt or in underwear because that is offensive and inappropriate. Although this is true, why are innocent items such as athletic shorts and leggings put on the same level as this? School dress codes should not be taken away completely but revised to fit modern clothing and equal views. My story of blatant objectification and sexism was not out of the ordinary. This type of inequality is present among schools across the nation. Public school dress codes should alter their dress codes to remove the sexism and objectification that is present within the policies.

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Questions to Consider

1. While narrative arguments still rely most heavily on a story to carry most of the persuasive elements, they can include outside research and sources, as Rachel has chosen to do in this essay. How do the outside sources add to her claims? How does she integrate additional voices into her narrative? How might she have chosen these sources to include in her story? As a reader, what other information might have been helpful to convince you? How might a writer find an effective balance between the personal narrative and outside research when composing a narrative argument?
2. Rachel talks about the anxiety she experienced when it came time to peer review this essay. While we may all experience some degree of reticence from time to time, do you think that some topics are more “sensitive” than others when it comes to sharing them? In your opinion, what is the power of telling a personal story as part of an argument for a particular position or viewpoint? How would this argument change if it were strictly a research-based essay? Would it be more convincing? Less? What does the element of personal experience add to Rachel’s position?
3. Narrative arguments often rely on ethos and pathos to carry the weight of the persuasion (though of course logos is often present as well). How does Rachel establish her ethos in this essay? What makes her a credible speaker on this topic? Additionally, how does she utilize emotional connection with her audience to get her point across? What words, phrases, or descriptions does she use to inspire an emotional reaction in her readers? As a reader, how did you respond to her description of her experience? What details lead to these responses, and how do they support her claims?

Category: Common Assignment

The Common Assignment is an essay that is required in all ENGL 101 courses at Xavier. Although the topic for this assignment may be different from class to class, the general parameters, goals, and learning outcomes are the same. Students in all sections of ENGL 101 read a common set of readings on the topic that offer different viewpoints, and then form their own arguments or positions based upon these readings, as well as additional outside research. The Common Assignment is typically composed (or at least revisited and revised) near the end of the semester so that students in ENGL 101 have the chance to build their writing, research, and argument skills by the time they craft and complete their Common Assignment essay.

This essay has multiple purposes. First, it gives all students in ENGL 101 the chance to explore a standard set of readings with their classmates before forming their own position on an issue. Second, because this assignment is required across all sections, it provides continuity in both knowledge and skills in order to complete, which means that all students who complete ENGL 101 are coming away from that class with a common skillset that they can take with them into their other courses. Third, it allows the Writing Program to have shared assignment criteria to assess the writing skills of students in ENGL 101 to make sure that we are meeting our promise to students and the university to successfully teach a set of learning outcomes for this course. Last, it allows students to test their own abilities in research, writing, and argumentation after practicing these skills all semester. By completing the Common Assignment, you participate in an experience shared by all ENGL 101 students and help the Writing Program improve the instruction it provides to you and to future students at Xavier.

In A.J. Frazier's essay, "First Americans: They Lost Their Land and Now Their Right to Vote," the author examines the ongoing issue of voter suppression but from the perspective of Native Americans and how their voting rights may be hindered by current governmental practices. Using common sources, as well as additional research that focuses on his specific issue of interest, A.J. shows readers how practices for Native Americans may be different than for most of the rest of American society, as well as what we can do to rectify these injustices.

Connor Haskell explores study habits for students, specifically asking questions about how introverts may differ in their approaches and preferences for learning activities. While much research focuses on the importance of group work and collaborative team interactions, Connor points out that this perspective may not apply to all people. By asking these questions, Connor addresses issues that are common to many college students (how to best study) but offering a perspective that challenges the extrovert-driven society we will in.

In both cases, A.J. and Connor take common readings and issues that are widely discussed and focuses them on diverse perspectives that may not always be as widely considered. By doing this, these students show the possibility of taking the Common Assignment and turning it toward uncommon interests to represent diverse positions on a topic.

First Americans: They Lost Their Land and Now Their Right to Vote

A.J. Frazier

D'Artagnan Award Honorable Mention

Common Assignment

Reflection

The idea for this essay came from interacting with a friend who has Native American heritage. He told me about what his parents had to go through, and I felt it was a great topic to do for the Common Assignment. The most challenging part for me was to find the sources and do the research. I first made an outline for the paper and then gradually added things to each section of the outline and revised it. I revised my work by having other people read it and give me pointers and I also read it out loud to myself. I did not take my paper to the Writing Center, but I did receive feedback from my instructor. I would tell students to start research early and go to your instructor with rough drafts of your paper so you know what you need to work on. I would also say don't wait until the last minute to start your paper.

First Americans: They Lost Their Land and Now Their Right to Vote

Being born in the United States grants a person certain unalienable rights. One of those rights is the right to vote. While for some, voting has been granted to them since the establishment of the United States, others have had to fight for the same right. Civil rights movements have altered the United States in many ways for many people, but for Native Americans living in states that require voter ID's, their basic right to vote is denied. Native Americans are losing their right to vote in the United States through various forms of voter suppression when they deserve the right to cast a ballot.

The United States has had a vast history of voter suppression. New amendments have been added to the United States Constitution to ensure everyone has an equal and fair opportunity to vote. The 15th Amendment grants citizens the right to vote without being denied by race or color. The 19th Amendment grants women the right the vote without being denied by sex. The 24th Amendment allows citizens the right to vote without paying poll taxes. Finally, the 26th Amendment allows citizens eighteen years of age and older to vote ("Bill of Rights and Later Amendments to the United States Constitution"). All of those amendments ensure every person the equal right to vote; however, to Native Americans living on reservations, those amendments are of no use to them.

In 2002, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act or HAVA. One requirement to vote under HAVA is to present a photo ID with a current address (Harrison 597). States across the United States began to implement stricter voter ID laws to avoid voter fraud. When in fact, it has been proven that voter fraud does not occur often enough for Voter ID laws to even work (Underhill). Currently thirty-four of the fifty states require some form of identification when going to vote (Underhill). For Native Americans, voter ID's are a form of disenfranchisement. Native American reservations do not have street addresses. Therefore, on their official ID's, Native Americans have no address listed. (Harrison 597). Since no address is listed, when they vote in States that require a voter ID to vote, they are turned away because there needs to be an official street address to prove residency.

Native American reservations can be found in twenty-five states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (Salazar). Out of those twenty-five, only seven do not require voter ID: Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Wyoming (Salazar). Meaning that in the other eighteen states that have reservations, Native Americans are required to show an ID that has no use to them when voting. Denying Native Americans the right to vote because of where they live is a violation to their rights. Throughout US history Native Americans have been relocated from their tribal lands and put onto government sanctioned reservations against their will. It wasn't until 1924 that Native Americans gained citizenship in the United States (Salazar). They were the true first Americans on U.S. soil and denying them the right to vote because they live on reservations that the U.S. government put them into is unjust and unfair.

Not only are Native Americans denied the right to vote in some states, but even when they do have the right, state governments make it almost impossible for them to vote. The Native American population only makes up about two percent of the U.S. population, but they still deserve the right to vote. There have only been five Native American senators and sixteen representatives, with two more incoming females in 2019 (McCoy 293). Natives have had little representation in the U.S. government to make changes.

While Native Americans are given the right to vote in states without voter ID laws, they are still facing barriers when voting. Many states will set up polling places miles away from a reservation on purpose in order to disenfranchise the Native American population. They set the polling places so far because many Native Americans do not make enough money to afford to make a trip that requires an expense such as gas. Also, mail-in ballots do not work with reservation mailing systems. Therefore, many Native Americans believe their voices are not heard. The United States government has silenced Native Americans for years, and it feels that since they only make up two percent of the population, nothing should change for them (Rowena). The reality is that if Native Americans were to have every obstacle removed from their voting situation, they could turn a state-wide race in at least five states (McCoy 293).

The government makes it difficult for Native Americans to vote and this should not be the case. They are United States citizens and that citizenship grants them the right to vote.

While Native Americans are fighting for the simple right to vote, the media has had a huge impact on the movement. From issues such as the Dakota Access Pipe Line to the recent disenfranchisement of North Dakota Native Americans, young natives have been voicing their struggles. The Internet is more appealing to younger generations, which is why many people are finding out about Native Americans' struggles (Klotz 23-38). Native Americans are using the media as an outlet for their frustrations. More and more natives are voicing what life is like on reservations and how the United States has treated them, and people are starting to listen. Recently, young Native Americans have started pushing for changes to Voter ID laws. As the young adult voter turnout continues to increase (Klotz 23-38), the more liberal laws and government will become, and it is a change many Native Americans want to see because they have been restricted under many conservative administrations.

In closing, denying Native Americans the right to vote is unconstitutional. The United States continues to oppress the Native American population, but with the help of the media, hopefully things will change. By Native Americans beginning to make noise about the issue, they are bringing light to an issue that could potentially affect more people. As a United States citizen, one is granted certain rights, one of which is the right to vote. Without that right, citizens cannot elect the person they want to represent them, nor do they have a say about what happens in their community and country. Voting is how the United States runs properly and without granting each one of its citizens that basic right, the United States risks denying its citizens their basic inalienable rights.

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Questions to Consider

1. In A.J.'s opening, he begins from a place of common ground by bringing up the "unalienable right" to vote, but then contrasts that with the issue of Native American voting right suppression, along with a thesis outlining his argument. What is the rhetorical effect of beginning from a place of common ground or a position that most American readers would recognize and agree with before transitioning to a claim that might not be so familiar? What would the effect be if he had instead decided to open with a controversial claim, rather than a common one?
2. In any argument, the writer has to make choices about how to arrange information—what to present first, second, third, etc.—in order for the argument to make sense and be convincing. How do you think that A.J. made decisions about organizing this information? What background might he have had to offer readers before going into more detail or making claims? Do you find his organizational strategy effective? Why or why not?
3. Audience is an important consideration for any controversial argument, and the beliefs that audience members already hold will affect how they integrate or respond to new information. Who might be the intended audience for A.J.'s essay? How can you tell? Who do you think would be most likely to be influenced by this argument? Who would be least likely to change their minds or perspectives? How can writers approach argumentation in a way that will be most appealing to audiences that may be predisposed to disagreeing?

The Benefits of Being Alone

Connor Haskell

D'Artagnan Award Honorable Mention

Common Assignment

Reflection

During writing my common assignment, it was not very difficult to come up with my topic. I wanted to make a compelling argument that not many people would agree with. I wanted to write a paper that went against the social norm; however, writing a paper that is against the social norm is, at times, difficult because there's a plethora of research that goes against the claims I made in my paper. I approached this paper like most of the papers I wrote this year. I first came up with my thesis and started to compose my outline around that thesis. From there, my paper fell into place and wasn't that difficult to write, as we have been writing arguments all year. Some advice I would give to first-year students is take your time on these papers. It is tough to write these arguments and papers in one night. It could have worked in high school but here at Xavier teachers can tell when a paper has had the proper amount of thought and has received the proper amount of revision a paper needs. Take your time on these papers, and your grades will show!

The Benefits of Being Alone

Students across the globe have libraries in their cities where they can go to study and read. For hundreds of years, libraries have been providing a space for students to gather and prepare for class assignments. Why do students continually rely on libraries? The answer is simple; it is because libraries provide students with a peaceful environment to study on their own and not be distracted by the outside world. When a student studies with friends or is surrounded by the multiple distractions that are part of everyday life, it is difficult for that student to thrive and create his or her best work. On the other hand, when a student is provided with a study environment with no distractions, the student is able to succeed to their maximum potential and shine in the classroom. Being able to escape from the tug of Instagram, Facetime, Snapchat, Netflix, and the many other distractions students face on a daily basis is invaluable to success as it allows for time to simply focus on the topic in front of you. Without a doubt, students are more productive and more creative in their own study space with quiet surroundings.

Many teachers and professors suggest that working in groups can lead to a more creative product. Often, however, this is not always the case. While working in groups, it is difficult for every group member to voice their ideas and have their voice be heard. In fact, sometimes in a group setting, whether it be from insecurity, low self-esteem, or some other similar quality, some students

are unwilling or unable to share their ideas. As a result, potentially excellent suggestions are left unspoken. Sarah Sparks, in “Children Must Be Taught to Collaborate, Studies Say: Researchers Explore Group Work in Class,” discusses how “students who are naturally more outspoken...tend to be more likely to be primary leaders (Sparks). For a student that is shy, however, they may not feel comfortable with sharing their ideas for fear of being judged for their ideas. They may also fear that the more vocal member of the group will dismiss and embarrass them. In addition, in a group setting, there can be added pressure on students as they realize that others are depending upon them for their work and vice versa so that “conflicts often arise when a group of people works together. Different personalities aren’t always compatible, especially when you have one or more opinionated members” (Frost). When a student is not allowed to thrive in their own study space, creating their own work individually, struggles for that student may develop. Moreover, when students are not able to present their own work and focus on what they need to do, frustration, not only for the student but also throughout the group, may also emerge. When students are given their own space to work on a project or study for a test individually, however, they can be more successful as they can explore their own thoughts and work with no distractions.

In addition to the difficulties for some of learning with a group, the negative impact of other types of distractions when studying cannot be ignored. For example, many students suggest that listening to music while studying or while in class is beneficial. In fact, earbuds have become almost another body part for today’s student. Research proves, however, that this is not the case. In fact, a lack of quiet surroundings can only lead to distraction and with distraction comes a lack of focus. “New research out of the University of Wales Institute in Cardiff says listening to music can damage your performance on certain study tasks” (Briggs). The study suggests that when listening to music, students are simply not focused on the work in front of them. When someone is distracted, they cannot produce their best work. Students who have their own study space with quiet surroundings, on the other hand, can tap into their creative mind and deliver the best results.

All of this can be especially true for a student who is considered an introvert. In her *TED* Talk titled “The Power of Introverts,” Susan Cain discusses the difficulties of being an introvert or someone who is quiet, tends to want to do things alone, and work in a “low-key environment” (Cain). She speaks of how growing up as an introvert, people always looked down upon her, trying to make her to be more of an extrovert. She also suggests that quiet study spaces are critical for the introvert. Because of the amount of group assignments in today’s classroom, introverts may feel left out. “For the kids who prefer to go off by themselves or just to work alone, those kids are seen as outliers or problem cases,” Cain says. This happens even though “introverts actually get better grades and are

more knowledgeable, according to research” (Cain). In fact, introvert qualities have led to great successes in the classroom and outside of it, as some of the brightest people in the world are introverts.

While having access to study spaces and quiet surroundings have demonstrated proven results for students, many argue that when a student is isolated, they will not learn how to work well with others and will eventually struggle in the real world. In fact, some researchers such as Caruso and Woolley or Mannix and Neale claim that “Group projects can help students develop a host of skills that are increasingly important in the professional world” (qtd. in Eberly Center). There have been many arguments that have made compelling points on why group work is beneficial for someone and why studying in groups are beneficial. However, for many, it is still difficult to retain information on their own while in a group or ensure that their ideas are presented. Sparks suggests that while “at its best, collaboration in the classroom can help students think more deeply and creatively about a subject and develop more empathy for others’ perspectives. At its worst, group tasks can deteriorate into awkward silences, arguments or frustration for the one child who ends up doing everyone else’s work” (Sparks). Working individually in a private study space with quiet surroundings allows students to retain information better as they are actually learning the information on their own.

Students who use study spaces and take advantage of quiet surroundings have been seen to receive improved grades and can better understand the information taught in the classroom. When a student is given the ability to have their own study space, void of distractions with quiet surroundings, this student is set up for success. Study spaces provide an element for students to escape the outside world of distractions and provide them with quiet surroundings to focus on their work. When a student can focus on their own studies, this allows them to obtain and retain information more efficiently and have more individual, creative thoughts while working or studying. They also are less likely to be ignored or talked over by the more extroverted people who surround them. Many schools, in support of this argument, have created dedicated, quiet study spaces for their students to get their work done and focus on their studies. When students isolate themselves from outside distractions for periods of time, who knows what they could achieve in or outside the classroom?

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Questions to Consider

1. In contrast to a genre such as the Narrative Argument, classical arguments such as this one do not tend to bring in personal information or speak from a first-person perspective. In considering the issue presented here, do you find it more convincing to have the information presented objectively, from a third-person perspective? How would a personal story have added to, or detracted from, Connor's position? Do you make any assumptions about the writer's interest in this issue, based upon the topic? When a writer doesn't use "I language," how do you form the ethos of that writer?
2. Connor offers various perspectives about learning environments and the relative benefits of working in groups versus solitary studying. What is Connor's main argument? What is the purpose of the counter-arguments or other views that he offers in this essay? Would his argument have been as convincing if he only argued for his position and never presented ideas that were different from his own? Why or why not? What is the purpose of including counter-arguments in an argument essay?
3. This essay addressed dilemmas or issues students often face when it comes to how they study and learn best. As a student yourself, what information do you take away from this essay? To whom might this argument be directed? Who might need to hear this information or consider these arguments? Do you consider yourself part of that audience? Why or why not?